

CROSSING THE LINE
By Malcolm Hart

EXT. THE OCEAN. DAY.

SUPER JANUARY 1954

Dawn breaks. The sun rises on a placid sea. The bow of the Athlone Castle, a middle-aged, two-funnel passenger liner, barely raises a wave and the wake of its screws is quickly absorbed into the unctuous stillness of the ocean.

EXT. SHIP'S SWIMMING POOL. DAY.

The sun is high in a cloudless sky. There's laughter and gaiety. Large numbers of passengers are crowded around the swimming pool. Members of the ship's crew in make-shift costumes, and crude make-up, clown the ritual initiation of novice travelers common to all passenger-carrying ships when they cross the equator.

PAN DOWN

A porthole on a lower deck of the ship.

INT. A CABIN. DAY.

PETE and LIZ, an attractive couple in their mid twenties, are pressed together naked in a bunk making love. LIZ is of medium height, boyish short blond hair, pale blue eyes. PETE is taller, clean-shaven, dark and handsome. Their bodies are covered in sweat as they work at it until they reach orgasm.

LIZ cuddles him lovingly. She strokes his hair. They lie silently for a few moments, listening to the distant persistent thump of the ship's engines. LIZ lights up a cigarette. They share it.

LIZ

Wanna know something strange? My mum and dad met on this boat.

PETE

You're kidding.

LIZ

Right here on the old Athlone. It's highly likely I was conceived deep in the bowels of this old tub.

They both laugh. LIZ draws on the cigarette

PETE

Where were they heading?

LIZ exhales.

LIZ

Lord knows. They were crew.

PETE

Oh?

LIZ

Mum was a laundress...

Long pause

PETE

What was your dad?

LIZ

D'know... assistant sous chef or something.

Long pause. LIZ is dealing with bitter thoughts.

Mum heard he'd settled in Australia.

LIZ takes a long drag at the cigarette.

BEGIN TITLES

EXT. SEASCAPE TABLE MOUNTAIN. DAY.

Dawn. The mountain a dark shadow on the horizon, lights twinkling around the harbour.

EXT. BOAT DECK. DAY.

PETE is alone on the boat deck. He leans on the rail absorbing the extraordinary beauty of the mountain silhouetted against the dawn sky.

EXT. CAPETOWN DOCKS. DAY.

A vibrant bustling scene of noise and colour. Passengers on the Athlone Castle bidding each other hasty farewells. Raggedly dressed Coloured porters struggle against the tide of disembarking passengers to get on board for their luggage. LIZ and PETE follow a porter carrying their bags down to the quayside.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM, QUAYSIDE. DAY.

LIZ and PETE follow the porter onto the train, destination JOHANNESBURG.

INT. TRAIN COMPARTMENT. DAY.

LIZ dumps herself on a seat by the window and stares out, frowning. The porter stows the luggage, PETE gives him some money. The porter takes off his cap, bows obsequiously.

PORTER

Baie dankie my Baas.

LIZ smiles at the porter. When the porter has gone, she looks at PETE accusatorially then returns her glum gaze to the window.

EXT. STATION PLATFORM. DAY.

The guard blows his whistle and the train pulls slowly out of the station.

EXT. HEX RIVER VALLEY. DAY.

The sun is high in a bright blue sky over a scene of beauty, warmth and tranquility. The train, chasing its own shadow, winds its way up the valley towards a range of purple mountains.

INT. COMPARTMENT. DAY.

LIZ gazes out the window, awe-struck by the landscape. She takes PETE's hand.

EXT. THE KAROO DESERT. NIGHT.

The train hurtles across the vastness of a desert, flat beneath an immense, star-decked sky.

INT. COMPARTMENT. NIGHT.

The compartment seats have been converted to sleeping berths, one above the other. The upper berth is empty. LIZ and PETE are both in the lower berth. They lie quietly awake in each others arms, listening to the rhythms of the train as it thunders on.

END TITLES.

EXT. PARK STATION, JOHANNESBURG. DAY.

PETE oversees the loading of their luggage into a taxi.

LIZ looks around her at the bustling, colourful, station-yard scene, the affluence, the architecture, gleaming modern towers rising above older, more genteel terra cotta colonial buildings surrounded by palm trees, all aglow in the warm summer sunshine.

She's concerned, saddened by the contrasting shabby condition of the Africans, some in western clothes, some tribally dressed, women with bundles on their heads and babes on their backs, thronging in their hundreds around the station or waiting in long queues for buses.

She's delighted by the up-beat tune a raggedly dressed skinny kid is playing on a penny whistle as he strolls confidently out of the station and along the street.

INT. TAXI. DAY.

LIZ gets into the taxi with PETE and they drive off. She sinks back into her seat, heaves a great sigh. Shakes her head. PETE takes her hand. Silence.

LIZ

Are we going to your house now?

PETE squeezes her shoulder.

PETE

Our house.

EXT. A QUIET, LEAFY SUBURBAN STREET. DAY.

An elderly, sprawling bungalow, quaint colonial Dutch gable festooned with jasmine, Spanish designs in wrought iron at the windows, half concealed from the road by a jacaranda tree and colourful sub-tropical bushes. The taxi draws to the curb. The door opens, LIZ gets out very slowly, taking off her sunglasses, a look of disbelief on her face.

LIZ
Oh Petey. Is this ours?

She laughs with delight. PETE wallows in her happiness. The cab driver unloads their luggage, PETE pays him. The cab drives away.

INT. HOUSE. DAY.

The front door opens and PETE, LIZ in his arms, elbows his way in. The house is devoid of furniture. He carries her from room to room. LIZ looks about her curiously.

PETE
Bit classier than Holloway Road...

LIZ
You said it was furnished.

PETE
It is.

He elbows another door open into a room, also empty except for a large, made-up double bed.

INT. BEDROOM. DAY.

PETE dumps LIZ on the bed. She rolls over, lies on her back, arms outstretched to him, grinning.

LIZ
Aw... Pete...

He leans over her. She pulls him down on top of her, kisses him. They make love.

EXT. BACK OF THE HOUSE. DAY.

The back door is unbolted and opens. PETE leads LIZ by the hand out into the garden. Both are bare-footed, PETE

shirtless. They walk around the unkempt garden. PETE waves at a bunch of trees.

PETE

Apples... apricots... grapes...

LIZ puts her arm around PETE's waist. She's visibly awed and delighted by her new territory.

LIZ

Have you brought me to your garden
of Eden my Pete my Adam my lover my
husband?

They hold each other passionately as though they'll never let go. Over his shoulder, LIZ notices two tumbledown out-houses at the bottom of the garden.

LIZ

What's that?

PETE

What?

PETE turns.

PETE

Oh. If we had servants that's where
they'd live.

A telephone starts ringing in the house.

I'll be right back.

PETE trots back to the house.

LIZ walks slowly down the path to the servants' quarters. They are two shabby, one-roomed apartments built of breeze block in the shade of a Plain tree. LIZ wanders around them, peering through small grimy windows into empty, disused

rooms. The walls are stained with damp. She shivers, walks back into the warm sunlight and, soberly, thoughtfully, back to the house.

INT. SITTING ROOM. DAY.

PETE is sitting on the floor amongst the luggage talking on the telephone. LIZ enters, wanders to the window and looks out through the wrought-iron bars.

PETE

Ask her yourself when you see her.

He listens patiently. Winks at LIZ.

Yes sure. Sure. I know. Give her my love. Bye.

He puts down the telephone.

LIZ

When's the interview?

PETE

Don't be like that. Don't make this harder for me than it already is.

LIZ

Harder for you?

She's not happy. She picks up a suitcase and lugs it towards the bedroom.

INT. THE BALCONY OF A MODERN APARTMENT. NIGHT.

A view of the Johannesburg night-skyline. PETE and LIZ sit together on a couch.

BEN SIMMS, a bespectacled, middle-aged man, sits in an armchair across from his wife, ROSE, the same age as her husband, a comfortable looking woman. She concentrates on

her knitting. None of them speaks. They sit listening to the clack of ROSE's needles. Inside the apartment, beyond the sliding glass doors, a middle-aged African woman, SELMA, is clearing the dinner table.

ROSE

What about the children? That's what I'd like to know. What will the children be?

She looks up, unsmiling, from her knitting for a moment.

PETE and LIZ exchange glances. She scarcely hides her impatience. He offers her a cigarette and they light up.

BEN smiles at LIZ. LIZ smiles back.

LIZ

What will they be?

ROSE

Yes.

PETE

Leave off mum. We've just got here...

BEN

Mum means a child needs to know what religion it is.

LIZ

Oh. I see. I'd not really thought about it.

BEN

You'd agree it would be better if you and Pete were the same religion wouldn't you?

LIZ

Of course... we've discussed it at length haven't we Petey? I just hadn't thought about children.

Ben is reassured, mildly pleased.

BEN

I'll speak to Rabbi Ledderman.
We'll see what we can do.

Ben leans forward, confidential, smiling. He pats LIZ on the knee.

I don't need to tell you it's something that will make Mum and I very happy.

A beautiful African girl of about nineteen, DORIS, a servant, steps out onto the balcony carrying a tray of coffee and cakes. LIZ watches her. PETE looks at his watch, picks up a magazine and flicks through it unseeing. DORIS stands before ROSE offering her cake. ROSE waves her away. ROSE smiles girlishly at LIZ.

ROSE

Dad and I are on a diet. But you eat. It's fresh today from Glintzes.

DORIS brings the tray to LIZ.

LIZ

Thank you. What's your name?

LIZ's question galvanizes attention. DORIS glances at ROSE, lowers her eyes, smiling shyly.

DORIS

Doris madam.

LIZ takes the coffee.

LIZ
Thanks Doris.

DORIS
Yes madam.

LIZ smiles. DORIS serves PETE and leaves. ROSE glowers after her.

ROSE
She's new. It's not easy finding
good servants these days.

She sighs.
Thank God for Selma. She's been
with us ever since we arrived.
Heaven knows what I'd have done
without her. And she cooks.

She raises her eyes to LIZ.
You have to find one that can cook.
There's an agency in town. They'll
find you someone.

LIZ
We're not going to have servants.

ROSE
Don't be silly dear. Tell her
Peter. Everyone has servants. They
don't cost much as long as they're
not stealing from you.

LIZ draws deeply on her cigarette. She looks at PETE. He's not paying attention.

BEN

It'll probably take you a little time to get used to. It's a different way of life out here.

EXT. BUSY JOHANNESBURG STREET. DAY.

PETE enters the modern reception hall of Soames & Styman Advertising.

INT. SOAMES AND STYMAN ADVERTISING AGENCY. DAY.

PETE gets in the lift with a bunch of people.

INT. LIFT. DAY.

PETE in the lift with a bunch of smartly dressed men and women. They know him.

YOUNG WOMAN

Mr. Simms. Welcome home.

PETE

Thanks Brenda.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

How's it feel to be a respectably married man Simms?

PETE

Early days yet Mr. Vorster...

PETE is alone when he gets out at the top floor.

INT. CREATIVE DEPARTMENT, DAY.

An art studio of desks and drawing boards ranged up against the walls leaving a broad aisle between. Four men at desks, smoking, drinking coffee, reading the newspaper.

SANDY, smartly dressed, forty, pink and plump, has a pronounced English midland accent. ANDREW, fifty-five, tall with a stoop, drawls upper-middle class English.

ROD DYER, twenty-two, sharply dressed, clean shaven and crew cut, speaks with a guttural South African accent.

FLIPPY VAN ZIJL, also about twenty-two, short and plump, a Van Dyke beard on his chubby, amiable chin, speaks Afrikaans better than English.

They all look up as PETE enters.

PETE

Morning all. What's the score?

Andrew turns to Sandy.

ANDREW

If I didn't know better, I'd say that sounded like young Pete.

SANDY

Can't be. Didn't you hear? He was found on the Pretoria Road yesterday morning shagged to death.

Everyone's glad to see PETE. They stand and gather round to shake his hand.

Welcome home you old bastard.
You look nackered.
If it's such hard work laddy you'd be better off getting a Kaffir to do it for you!

Laughter. PETE smiles, shakes his head, turns to the younger men.

PETE

How are you Rod? Flippy... hoe
gaan dit?

ROD

Great Pete. Congratulations.
Welcome back.

FLIPPY

Goed danke PETE. D'is goed jou
weer te sien Engelsman.

ANDREW

Tony's been asking when to expect
you old boy.

PETE goes to his own desk. He picks up the telephone and
dials.

PETE

Hello Mr. Farquard it's Simms. I'm
in the office.

INT. TONY FARQUARD'S OFFICE. DAY.

The furniture is tasteful and expensive. Farquard, late
forties, tall, elegantly dressed, is lying on a chaise
longue, eyes closed behind dark glasses, hands folded on his
stomach, is talking. He speaks with a weary, upper-middle
class drawl. PETE, smoking, sits in an easy chair.

FARQUARD

Ergol want to introduce themselves
to the natives... strange really...
Anyway... what we need is a
gimmick... a concept... something
simple and memorable that will make
the native population feel good
about Ergol petrol.
You're not dealing with the most

educated of minds here. Nothing too sophisticated.
Will you think about that for me?

PETE
Certainly.

PETE stands, walks to the door.

FARQUARD
How's the wife dear boy? Settled in?

EXT. LIZ & PETE'S GARDEN. DAY.

The garden looks fairly orderly. The grass is cut and some of the flower beds have been dug over. It's late afternoon. LIZ, deeply tanned, sunbathes in a bikini. A towel, sun-tan lotion, cigarettes, books and newspaper scattered around her. She rouses herself, yawning and stretching. She gets up and wanders towards the house.

INT. THE KITCHEN. DAY.

The kitchen is now completely furnished with built in cupboards, refrigerator etc. The clock on the wall says five. She hurriedly prepares food, shoves things in the oven.

INT. BATHROOM. DAY.

LIZ strips off and looks at herself in the mirror. Twists around to see the contrast between her sunburned back and white bottom. She looks at herself with dissatisfaction for a few moments then steps into the shower.

INT. SITTING ROOM. DAY.

In the now tastefully furnished sitting room, LIZ, freshly showered wearing a towel, wet hair slicked back, lights a

cigarette and pours herself a drink. Outside, it's twilight.

INT. DINING ROOM. NIGHT.

LIZ and PETE sit eating dinner. PETE eats hungrily. LIZ is moody. She picks at her food.

PETE
How was your day?

It's some moments before she replies.

LIZ
I finished the book. Wrote to mum.
Did my nails. Got a bit browner.
And yours?

PETE
Farquard handed me the Ergol
account.

LIZ is silent. She pushes her plate from her.

They're the biggest oil producers
in Africa

LIZ
Bully for you.

PETE looks up.

PETE
What's that supposed to mean?

LIZ lights a cigarette.

LIZ
Sorry. I've been a bit out of
sorts lately.

PETE finishes eating. Pushes his plate away and refills the wine glasses. LIZ inhales, exhales. Sips her wine.

PETE

I spoke to Dad today. He said there was no news from the Rabbi.

LIZ

Too bad. How's your mum?

She notes PETE's look of impatience.

How's our mum?

PETE

Fine when I last spoke to her. Having servant problems. She's having to let Doris go.

LIZ

You mean she's firing her.

PETE

Yes.

LIZ

What'll she do?

PETE

She's got Selma.

LIZ

I mean Doris for chrissake. What will Doris do when she's got no job? Doesn't it mean she'll have to leave Johannesburg? Isn't there some bloody law about it?

PETE

Yes.

LIZ

What a bloody idiotic country this is!

LIZ drains her glass. Sits back.

LIZ

Your mum's always telling us to take a servant... We'll give Doris a job? Not a real job... She could help out if she likes... that way she wouldn't have to leave Johannesburg.

PETE considers it.

She could live at the bottom of the garden. I could tart the place up a bit. Why don't you talk to her?

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

LIZ and PETE in bed. PETE is asleep, snoring gently. LIZ lies awake, smoking a cigarette, gazing at the ceiling.

EXT. LIZ & PETE'S HOUSE. EVENING.

PETE drives up, parks the car in the driveway. The lights are on in the house and African jazz music is loud. PETE locks the car and goes into the house.

INT. SITTING ROOM. NIGHT.

Music loud on the hi-fi, no one in the room. PETE comes in, puts down his briefcase, walks through to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

LIZ is dancing a sexy African township dance, with DORIS. A cigarette burns in an ashtray, glasses and an open bottle of sherry stand on the kitchen counter. DORIS stops dancing when she sees PETE come in. She bows her head bashfully.

DORIS

Good evening master...

LIZ, dancing, laughs.

LIZ

You sound like a Genii popping out of a lamp. How many times do I have to tell you... his name's Pete.

DORIS retreats shyly. LIZ dances up to PETE.

Doris has been teaching me. It's called Kwela.

PETE is annoyed and ill at ease.

DORIS

I will go see to the dinner.

LIZ

Thanks pet.

LIZ picks up her drink and cigarette from the kitchen counter, takes PETE's arm and kisses him on the cheek. He doesn't respond. They walk into the dining room.

INT. DINING ROOM. NIGHT.

PETE and LIZ sit at the table laid for dinner. Silence. PETE, moody, pours himself wine.

LIZ
What's up.

PETE
Nothing.

LIZ
You don't approve of me dancing
with the servant do you.

The sound from the kitchen of a plate breaking on the floor.

PETE
Has she been drinking?

LIZ
A sip of cooking sherry. Nothing.

Calling out

You all right Doris?

PETE
You shouldn't do that.

LIZ
What?

PETE
You shouldn't give her booze.
Africans aren't used to it.

LIZ
Darn' tootin' pardner! Them danged
Injuns jes' cain't hold their
liquor.
What Africans have you been
drinking with lately? How come
you're suddenly such a bloody
authority?

PETE is angry. He keeps his voice down so DORIS can't hear.

PETE

Come off it LIZ! You could get us
all into serious trouble.

LIZ quietens down. She looks sadly at PETE. Raises her
glass.

LIZ

I'm sorry. Cheers.

PETE

For chrissake...

LIZ

I said sorry. Let's drop it.

DORIS comes in with food on a tray. Head bowed, she serves
LIZ and PETE. She whispers.

DORIS

I'm very sorry about the plate.

LIZ smiles and touches DORIS's arm.

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

LIZ alone in bed in the darkened room, smoking. Sounds of
knocking, tapping, scraping, penetrate from another part of
the house.

INT. DARKROOM. NIGHT.

PETE is converting a small bedroom into a photographic
darkroom.

INT. ART STUDIO. DAY.

PETE at his desk, a pile of African newspapers and magazines in front of him. He gazes at the cover picture of one of the magazines. A beautiful young Basuto woman in a bikini. Of the magazines, it is more professionally presented than the others. Its cover lay-out resembles Life Magazine or Paris Match. Emblazoned in the box in the top left hand corner, the word DRUM.

Seated at the desk behind PETE, SANDY peers over PETE's shoulder, wondering what he's up to. He leaves what he's doing and saunters over to him. Looks at the cover girl.

SANDY

Wouldn't say no to a rasher or two
of that myself...

PETE doesn't look up.

PETE

You'd get done under the Immorality
Act.

SANDY

Can't stop a man thinking. Can they?

Sandy wanders back to his desk. PETE stares hard at the cover picture. He reaches for the telephone.

INT. TONY FARQUARD'S OFFICE. DAY.

Farquard sits behind his elegant desk. He and PETE are drinking coffee.

FARQUARD

A black beauty competition. I think you may have something there. I'll put it to Styman. I think it could be just what the witch-doctor ordered.
Yes. Well done Peter.

INT. LIZ & PETE'S DINING ROOM. NIGHT.

LIZ and PETE are sitting down to dinner. PETE, in self satisfied mood, draws a cork and pours wine. LIZ, bored, watches the wine tumbling into the glasses. DORIS is back and forth to the kitchen with plates and cutlery. PETE sips the wine.

PETE

How was your day?

LIZ is prickly. She stares at the wine in her glass, is slow to answer.

LIZ

I got up after you'd gone and there was so much to do I couldn't face it and went back to bed. OK?

PETE

Why don't you get out and about a bit? Sandy's Doreen keeps asking you.

LIZ (INCREDULOUSLY)

Sandy's Doreen?

PETE

Why not?

LIZ

Do you seriously expect me to spend
my time with that bigoted old bag?
Listen to her racist drivel about
how stupid her servants are and the
cost of living?

DORIS puts plates of food in front of LIZ and PETE. She
stands shyly waiting for LIZ's attention. LIZ looks up.

DORIS

My cousin is visiting from my home
village. Is it OK for him to stay
in my room tonight?

LIZ

For god's sake! Why the hell ask
me Doris?

DORIS hangs her head. LIZ is ashamed. She takes DORIS's
hand. She sighs wearily, looking up at her.

I'm sorry pet. I'm just not
feeling myself. Do what you like.

DORIS

Thank you LIZ. Good night. Good
night master Pete.

LIZ

He's not your master...

PETE

Night Doris.

DORIS exits demurely. LIZ refills her glass. Drinks. PETE
starts eating. LIZ ignores the plate of food and lights a
cigarette.

LIZ

I'm sorry. I don't know how much more of this I can take.

It's beginning to get to me. I can't sleep. I can't eat. I'm bad tempered. I really don't mean to be pet.

PETE is conciliatory.

PETE

I told you it's going to take a little time to get used to things.

LIZ

I have such conflicting feelings about this place. I hate it with a passion yet in some unaccountable way I feel ... I dunno... as though I've come home.

LIZ shrugs, laughs nervously, drains her glass, pours herself another. PETE lights a cigarette. They sit in silence. Slightly drunk, LIZ's anxiety mellows into a faint smile.

LIZ

It's me old working class background luv - always identifying with under-dogs.

How's it going at work? Did they go for the beauty competition?

PETE

Farquard said it was just what the witch-doctor ordered.

PETE shakes his head. They both laugh.

INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT.

LIZ opens the wall cabinet and takes out a contraceptive diaphragm. She puts it in her vagina. Switches off the light.

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

LIZ makes love furiously with PETE. He has an orgasm, rolls over exhausted and is quickly snoring. LIZ lies in the dark, gazing at the ceiling.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE. DAY.

LIZ is getting dressed. DOCTOR ELSA BLOOMENFELD, a short haired, stocky, bespectacled woman of about forty-five, sits behind her desk making notes while LIZ finishes dressing. Doctor Bloomenfeld speaks with a pronounced German accent.

DOCTOR

Sit down Mrs. Simms.

LIZ sits in a chair the other side of the desk.

There's absolutely nothing wrong
with you.

LIZ

Thank god for that.

The doctor puts down her pen, leans back in her chair looking sternly at LIZ.

DOCTOR

Do you have orgasms Mrs. Simms?

LIZ is startled. She's reticent, avoids the doctor's eyes.

Well do you?

LIZ (ALMOST INAUDIBLE)

No.

DOCTOR

With your husband?

LIZ

Not now.

DOCTOR

That's what's wrong with you. No wonder you can't sleep and have no appetite. Do you love him?

LIZ

Yes.

The doctor is unimpressed.

DOCTOR

What does this husband you love so much have to say? Don't you talk to him about it? Don't you complain?

LIZ is nervous. She replies quietly.

LIZ

No.

DOCTOR

Why on earth not?

LIZ

I don't know. We just...

DOCTOR

Sex is not something to be ashamed of. Orgasm is simply a question of mechanics. Anyone can do it.

Bring this husband of yours in.
I'd like to talk to him.

LIZ stands, picks up her purse. She nods.

EXT. DRUM OFFICES. DAY.

A shabby, two storey brick building in an industrial-looking part of Johannesburg. A cab draws to the curb. PETE gets out. He looks dubiously at the building, at the peeling paint, at the African youth on the flat roof taking a smoke in front of the fifteen-foot-high, dilapidated magazine logo... A police car is parked out front. The youth sees PETE, hides his cigarette behind his back, moves out of sight. PETE studies the police car as he enters the building.

INT. DRUM OFFICES. DAY.

A converted warehouse. Stationed at the entrance, the receptionist is the telephonist, POLLY NESSIM, a pretty, light skinned Asiatic. Behind her, about six men, five Africans one White, at desks.

ZEKE, 40, bespectacled, in collar and tie, studiously at work at his typewriter.

NIMROD, 30 +, lanky, good-looking, habitually rolls a matchstick around between his teeth, relaxed, reading a book.

MAGUBANI, 20, jeans and sneakers, is peering through a loop at contact sheets.

WILLIE, 35, medium build, fedora, American-style summer suit too large, white shirt, abstract tie, sits on the corner of PETER's desk reading an American film magazine.

FRITZ SCHONBURG, 25, blond good-looking, German, working on a Camera with a screwdriver.

GOSANI,18, is watching FRITZ.

WILLIE

Reads from the magazine

This John Wayne's too much. It's estimated he's been responsible so far for the movie deaths of two thousand and fifteen extras - the fifteen where white trash gunslingers the rest were injuns. I guess he has a race problem but I love him.

NIMROD looks up

POLLY

Hello handsome. What can I do you for?

PETE smiles.

PETE

Peter Simms for Mr. Schein. I have an appointment.

Polly picks up the phone, plugs in a jack. She eyes PETE as she speaks into the telephone.

POLLY

There's an Engelsman here for you.
Can I have him when you're through?
Thanks.

Polly puts down the phone.

He's in the glass cage.

PETE smiles. Polly swings around watching him walk across to the editor's office.

The journalists are in a downbeat mood. PETE passes between them. They raise their heads from somber thoughts, pause from their stories, from their negs and prints, their eyes following him curiously. No one smiles or greets him.

Apart from FRITZ the entire staff is black except ISAAC SCHEIN the editor. A shoulder-high glass partition divides his office from the rest of the warehouse.

INT. ISAAC SCHEIN 'S OFFICE. DAY.

The desk is covered in galley proofs; in and out trays overflow with letters and envelopes. Past covers of the magazine decorate the walls along with a heavily marked progress chart and an assortment of scraps of paper bearing written and printed information.

ISAAC SCHEIN is in his late thirties, lean, average height, clean-shaven, short greying hair, a face that depends largely on its personality for its good looks. It's a far from humourless face but, like a clown's, it rarely actually smiles. He wears a suit. His shoeless feet, in unmatched socks, are on the desk. He is deep in thought. He surfaces and stands as PETE approaches, waves him in. They shake hands.

ISAAC

Pete... Pete... don't tell me...

He wracks his brain.

PETE

Simms.

ISAAC

Simms. Of course. The beauty competition.

They both sit, Isaac behind his desk.

Related to the Durban Simmses are you?

PETE

I don't think so.

ISAAC

No. Look. You caught us at a bad time. Where you from? London?

PETE

Yes.

ISAAC

Yes. Look. We've just had some really bad news.

PETE

I'm sorry.

ISAAC

How long have you been here then?

PETE

Couple of years. Perhaps I should come back another time.

ISAAC

It's my deputy editor. Went missing a couple of days ago.
The cops think he's been murdered

ISAAC stands, looks out the window, down into the street.

Two years? How come we haven't met?

PETE

My wife and I don't know many people outside the office...

ISAAC
Come over here.

PETE joins him at the window.

That fellow in the mack.

THEIR POV THE STREET.

A European man in a khaki mackintosh and felt hat is ambling down the street on the far side. He stops.

ISAAC
See him?

The man in the mackintosh looks up, sees them. He turns around and ambles back up the street.

PETE
Who is he?

ISAAC and PETE move away from the window and sit down.

ISAAC
A cop. Special branch. Monitors everyone that comes and goes. Thought you ought to know. A beauty contest. Let's see...

ISAAC stands and shouts across the partition.

Willie?

WILLIE MODISANE, looks up.
Everyone looks up. WILLIE wears a fedora tipped to the back of his head, braces over white shirt and flamboyant American tie.

WILLIE
Ja my baas. Ek Kom. Ek kom.

WILLIE enters unsmiling. He rolls like John Wayne when he walks.

ISAAC

William Modisane our social editor.
Pete Simms.

PETE

How do you do?

WILLIE

Hi.

PETE and WILLIE shake hands. They all sit down.

ISAAC

This young rooinek wants some help
organizing a black beauty contest.

INT. BEN & ROSE'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Traditional, candle-lit, family Cedar. PETE and LIZ and numerous other related men, women and children, around the table. Ben Simms intones a Hebrew prayer.

INT. DARKROOM. NIGHT.

In the monochrome safe-light, PETE is developing pictures of LIZ. He slides the prints into the hypo and swills them around. He gazes at them. There's a sadness in her smile.

INT. PETE'S CAR. EVENING.

The sun is setting. PETE and LIZ drive away from Johannesburg into the gathering dusk. They don't speak. There's dance music on the radio. LIZ is in her own world.

PETE

Did you go to the doctor?

LIZ

Yes.

PETE

What did he say?

LIZ

She said there was nothing wrong
with me.

EXT. PETE'S CAR. NIGHT.

The car turns off a trunk road onto a country lane.

EXT. A FARM HOUSE. NIGHT.

A sprawling whitewashed and thatched farm house, windows ablaze with lights, laughter and music spilling out. PETE's car drives up and parks amongst many others.

INT. FARM HOUSE. NIGHT.

A sitting room, bohemian and comfortable, worn shabby by children and animals. A noisy, happy, multi racial crowd of people, predominantly white, drinks in hand, chat and joke animatedly above loud jazz music. A girl of ten, MAIVA, in her nightdress, dances with a young African female servant. A boy of six, PAULY, chases a large black Labrador through the room and out into the garden. The staff of Drum are there as well as a number of other suited African men. ISAAC SCHEIN, in shirtsleeves and barefooted, is the host. This is his home.

The whites are all in their late thirties but still collegiate in behaviour. ISAAC hovers around LIZ who, surrounded by men, Black and White, is being generous and ebullient as she engages in animated political conversation.

A plain, slightly overweight woman of thirty-five, glass in hand, walks up to PETE. Draws him away from the group. She's arch.

HATTIE

So you're the overpaid advertising man from London?

PETE

Yes.

HATTIE

Bloody ISAAC never introduces anyone. I'm Hattie Schein. He told me about you. Where did you live in London?

PETE

Regent's Park just by the zoo. You know it?

HATTIE

That's where ISAAC and I first met. He screwed me on Primrose Hill randy old sod. He said it was my duty to King and Country.

PETE laughs.

PETE

How did he figure that?

HATTIE

He was in the Air Force and I was a WAAF. He picked me up coming out of the open-air theatre.

PETE

What had you been to see?

HATTIE
As You Like It.

PETE laughs.

PETE
Hardly the sort of play to get the
juices flowing.

HATTIE
No? What gets your juices flowing
then?

She lowers her eyelids. A woman, JUDITH, joins them. Hattie
is annoyed at her intrusion.

JUDITH
Please don't let me interrupt.

HATTIE
Meet Judith van der Broek. Peter
Simms.

PETE
Hello Judith.

JUDITH
Isaac told me all about you. Where's
this wife of yours? I hear she's a
honey.

PETE
Here somewhere.

PETE and the two women look around the room.

JUDITH
You should keep your eye on her
jong. This lot turn into vampires
when there's fresh blood around.

POLLY NESSIM moves in on them.

POLLY
OK Engelsman. Let's dance.

Polly takes PETE away.

JUDITH
He's cute.

HATTIE
Where's that bloody Isaac?

EXT. STEIN'S GARDEN. NIGHT.

LIZ and ISAAC are walking away from the house, talking and laughing.

INT. STEIN'S SITTING ROOM. NIGHT.

The party is in full swing. Jackets and shoes are off, everyone drunk and dancing to Township Jazz music. LIZ dances the Kwela with WILLIE, the others dance around them, admiring them. PETE comes into the room and sees them just as the dance ends. LIZ and WILLIE join him. LIZ is beaming, breathless.

LIZ
Hello Pet...

PETE is uneasy.

PETE
Where've you been?

LIZ
Dancing with Willie. Didn't you see us?

They are distracted by an altercation developing in a corner between ISAAC and HATTIE, become noticeable in the lapse of music between records. Hattie is furious, Isaac a little shame faced. LIZ watches with interest.

HATTIE

You bastard! It's always the bloody same! You make me bloodywell sick!

ISAAC

What are you talking about Hats?

Hattie flings out of the room. The void of silence following Hattie's exit is suddenly filled again with jumpy jazz music. ISAAC shrugs, sips his wine, shuffles off on his own to the rhythm of the music.

Another of the staff of Drum, NIMROD, edges up to WILLIE, LIZ and PETE. He's tall, slim, soft-eyed, with a careless grin. He rolls a match stick between his teeth. He smiles at LIZ.

NIMROD

Care to dance?

LIZ looks at PETE. PETE looks at his watch.

PETE

I think it's time we got going.

LIZ shrugs and smiles at NIMROD.

LIZ

Thanks anyway. Bye Willie.

She kisses WILLIE on the cheek.

WILLIE

Bye Liz. Bye Pete. See you next week?

PETE

I'll phone you. Bye.

LIZ puts an arm around PETE's waist and they leave. ISAAC is leading a group of whites singing a traditional Afrikaans student song in cacophonous competition with the jazz.

WILLIE

Quite a cherry eh?

Nimrod nods, sad-eyed.

NIMROD

Didn't even ask my name.

INT. LIZ AND PETE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

PETE gets into bed alone. He lies, eyes open, listening to the sounds of splashing water from the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT.

LIZ, by candlelight, lies in a bath of steaming, foaming water, eyes closed, gently caressing between her legs with a face-cloth.

EXT. A MOUNTAIN LANDSCAPE. DAY.

ISAAC dives into the clear, placid water of a lake. LIZ follows him in. She strikes out for an island in the middle. ISAAC follows.

HATTIE sits dourly watching ISAAC and LIZ while MAIVE and PAULY play with CHARLIE the black Labrador. PETE sits around taking snaps of them. CHARLEY bounds down to the edge of the lake, barking, jumps in the lake and paddles towards LIZ and

ISAAC. The children run to the bank shouting for him to come back. Heavy summer storm clouds build on the horizon.

HATTIE

Maiva! Keep an eye on Pauly! He can't swim.

PAULY

Yes I can.

MAIVA

No you can't.

PAULY

I can.

MAIVA

Mummy says you can't.

Maiva slaps Pauly's hand. He starts crying. Hattie gets up.

HATTIE

I didn't tell you to bloody hit him!

Hattie picks up Pauly. Looks out to the middle of the lake at ISAAC, LIZ and the Labrador cavorting on the island. A roll of thunder.

INT. ISAAC'S STATION WAGON. DAY.

It's pouring. PETE, HATTIE and the children sit in silence as the rain thunders on the roof of the car and streams down the windows. HATTIE lights a cigarette.

HATTIE

Where the hell are they?

PETE

They've probably taken shelter.

Hattie looks dubiously at PETE then at her watch.

MAIVA

Don't worry mummy. It's just a
brief summer storm.

Hattie drags nervously at her cigarette.

HATTIE

I know sweetheart.

EXT. THE ROAD OUT OF THE MOUNTAINS. DAY.

ISAAC's station wagon speeds along.

INT. ISAAC'S STATION WAGON. DAY.

ISAAC hums quietly to himself as he drives. PETE, LIZ and
Hattie sit in stony silence. Pauly's asleep on Hattie's lap.

MAIVA

Where were you daddy? We thought
you and LIZ and Charley had got
drowneded didn't we mummy?

ISAAC

We weren't drowneded my sweet we
were sheltering from the storm.
Charlie found us a nice dry place.

HATTIE

Charlie's such a smart bloody dog.

MAIVA

Clever Charlie. D'you think
Charlie's a smart bloody dog Liz?

LIZ

Smarter than average.

MAIVA
Pete? Do you think Charlie's

HATTIE
For god's sake shut up Maiva!

Maiva starts to cry.

ISAAC
Now look what you've done.

Hattie gives ISAAC a blistering look.

EXT. JOHANNESBURG SKYLINE. DAY.

The sun is setting. The station wagon speeds towards Johannesburg silhouetted on the skyline.

EXT. LIZ & PETE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

ISAAC's Station wagon drives up. LIZ and PETE get out, doors slam, car drives off. LIZ and PETE enter the house.

INT. LOUNGE. NIGHT.

PETE is pouring himself a drink. LIZ slumps into an armchair.

PETE
Want a drink?

LIZ
Thanks.

PETE pours one for LIZ and hands it to her.

PETE
Where did you and ISAAC get to?

LIZ turns on him viciously.

LIZ

Don't you start for Christ's sake!

She slams the glass on the table and strides out of the room. Sounds from the bathroom of the shower being turned on. PETE looks glum. He sips his drink.

INT. DRUM RECEPTION. DAY.

Polly at the desk, a queue of young women, mostly African, a few Asian, all the way down to the street. Polly writes on a pad, tears it off handing it to the girl in line. She points behind her.

POLLY

Give this to Willie Modisane
beautiful.

Polly looks up at the young woman next in line.

Name age and place of birth
sweetie?

The first young girl goes past Polly into the Drum office.

INT. DRUM OFFICE. DAY

Next to a make-shift changing cubicle, a roll of no-seam paper taped out onto the floor. On the no-seam, under a blaze of photo-flood lights, a beautiful young African girl poses in her bikini for photographer FRITZ.

WILLIE and PETE sit close by, watching. Apart from an occasional ribald comment or wolf-whistle, the rest of the office functions much as usual. The usual staccato of typewriters, phones ringing and being answered, copy boys coming and going.

The young girl with Polly's slip of paper has been directed over to WILLIE and now stands shyly before him. He smiles and takes the piece of paper. He looks her up and down approvingly. Addresses her in Zulu pointing to the cubicle.

WILLIE

Go in there my beautiful child and take your clothes off.

GIRL

Do I have to be naked in front of this Whiteman?

WILLIE

Not naked. In a bathing costume.

GIRL

I don't like it in front of a whiteman.

WILLIE

It's all right. You have my word on it. He's a friend.

The girl looks at PETE. PETE wonders what's going on. The girl turns back to WILLIE, smiles.

GIRL

He's a bit like Rock Hudson.

She disappears into the cubicle.

PETE

Is there a problem?

WILLIE

She thinks you look like Rock Hudson.

INT. DARKROOM. NIGHT.

PETE is printing up pictures from the picnic. One is coming up in the developer, a picture of the kids squabbling at the lakeside. In the background, in the lake, the soft focus image of ISAAC and LIZ leaping and laughing with each other, is growing more and more distinct.

INT. SOAMES & STYMAN BOARDROOM. DAY.

PETE is addressing a meeting of business men. Tony Farquard and Hannes Styman, GRAHAM ROADS, fifty-five-year-old advertising director of Ergol, his assistant STOFFEL VAN RIEBECK and a secretary taking notes. PETE's delivery is enthusiastic.

PETE

The grand finale will be the biggest stage event Johannesburg has ever seen. Popular bands... vocal groups... dancing... everything building to the climax of the show... the announcement of the judges' choice for Miss Ergol 1956.

Silence around the table. Eyes shift hesitantly towards Rodes. Everyone awaits his reaction.

RODES

I think it's great.
Congratulations Pete. What do you think Hannes?

Hannes Styman smiles.

STYMAN

We think it fits the bill.

RODES
Stoffel?

VAN RIEBECK
I like it Mr. Rodes. I wonder
however what Mr. Simms means when he
says the biggest stage event
Johannesburg has ever seen. Does
he mean to stage the event in
Johannesburg itself?

Everyone looks at PETE.

PETE
When I said Johannesburg I meant
black Johannesburg.

VAN RIEBECK
So where would you hold it then?

PETE
In Sophiatown.

VAN RIEBECK
In the township?

RODES
Is it legal Hannes?

STYMAN
We've double checked with the
police.

RODES
Then let's get on with it.

RODES stands. Everyone stands.

EXT. SOPHIATOWN. EVENING.

The sun is setting behind the decrepit, corrugated iron shacks of the township. Smoke from the fires of street vendors, cooking and selling cobs of roast corn, hangs like a thin veil across the landscape. A car, recognisably PETE's, rocks and rolls its way down the rutted, litter-strewn street. Passers-by watch it, curious. Some call out insults in Zulu.

INT. PETE'S CAR. EVENING.

PETE drives, LIZ next to him, WILLIE gives directions from the back seat.

WILLIE

Stop at the red door. You can park here. The car will be safe.

PETE pulls up at the red door. WILLIE gets out.

EXT. WILLIE'S HOUSE. EVENING.

WILLIE thumps on the red-painted corrugated iron door and waits. Someone comes, and they exchange words in Zulu.

CHILD VO

Who?

WILLIE

Willie. Come on Josh. Open up.

CHILD VO

OK.

Bolts are drawn and the door grates open. A small boy of seven, JOSHUA, greets him, smiling. They continue in Zulu.

WILLIE

Greetings Josh. How goes it?

JOSHUA

It goes well Willie.

WILLIE beckons to LIZ and PETE in the car. They get out. PETE locks the doors. They go through the door into WILLIE's back yard.

EXT. WILLIE'S BACK YARD. EVENING.

Joshua pushes the door closed and slides home the bolts. The yard is small and untidy and backs on to a patch-worked, dilapidated, two room, tin roofed house. Each room has its own door onto the dirt yard.

WILLIE

This is my little brother Josh.

He addresses JOSH in Zulu.

These are my friends from England
Pete and LIZ. Greet them in
English. Go on. You can do it.

Joshua smiles shyly and runs into the house.

A middle-aged woman, MA WILLIE, meets him in the doorway. The boy hides behind her, peeking out at the strangers. She addresses WILLIE in Zulu.

MA WILLIE

You are early.

WILLIE leads LIZ and PETE up to Ma WILLIE.

WILLIE

This is Liz. This is Pete.

And then in English to LIZ and PETE.

Meet my mother. Ma Willie.

They shake hands. WILLIE addresses MA WILLIE in Zulu.

WILLIE (CONT.)

Has Gerhard arrived yet?

MA WILLIE

Not yet and just as well. Zena has only now finished laying out the food. Ask your friends if they would like to come in for a sip before they eat.

She smiles at them. WILLIE makes a wry face.

WILLIE

With respect Ma I have a nice bottle of wine for them in the fridge.

MA WILLIE shrugs and goes indoors.

LIZ

What did she say?

WILLIE

She was offering you African beer. She brews it herself and sells it. Illegal but it's a living.

INT. WILLIE'S ROOM. NIGHT.

A small room. A large, iron-framed bed occupies one entire corner, a refrigerator another, a third corner curtained off for clothes. The remaining floor space is filled with an easy-chair, some stools, a coffee table and a new portable record player. Against a wall are shelves of books and records, the walls themselves covered with film posters, mostly westerns, and an occasional postcard reproduction of a

painting. The table is laid with little sandwiches, olives, smoked salmon etc.

WILLIE

It ain't much folks but it's home.
Make yourselves comfortable. Let
me have your coat LIZ.

She hands WILLIE her jacket. He hangs it behind the curtain with his hat. Goes to the refrigerator and takes out a bottle of wine, opens it and pours three glasses. He hands them around. He switches on the record player and out comes Beethoven's Violin Concerto.

WILLIE

Cheers.

They all drink and start breaking into the food. A knock on the door and WILLIE's on his feet. He lays his head close to the door.

WILLIE

Yes?

A voice mumbles. WILLIE opens the door. A short, stocky African, SHORTSTRAW, pokes his head in, smiles and nods to LIZ and PETE, speaks in Zulu to WILLIE.

SHORTSTRAW

Saw the car.

WILLIE is cool. Shortstraw shuffles his feet. Smiles again at LIZ and PETE.

What's that noise man?

Shortstraw points to the record player.

WILLIE

Ludwig Van Beethoven.

Shortstraw makes a wry face.

SHORTSTRAW

What could you expect with a name like that. Come on man... invite me in for a little drink to meet your friends.

WILLIE capitulates, closes the door behind SHORTSTRAW. Shortstraw shakes hands with LIZ and PETE and sits down. WILLIE pours him a glass of wine. He drinks. There's a knock at the door. WILLIE goes through the same procedure. This time his face lights up as he opens the door. A tall, heavily built, bearded whiteman wearing a beret enters. GERHARD PLOTZ is in his late twenties. He keeps his beret on, speaks perfect English in a deep, resonant voice with a German accent.

PLOTZ

Sorry I'm late. Got held up.

WILLIE

You been in Africa too long boetie. You're running on African time.

Laughter. PLOTZ acknowledges Shortstraw. They shake hands in the African manner, gripping each other's thumb.

PLOTZ

Shortstraw. How goes it?

SHORTSTRAW

Nice to see you Gerhard. How's tricks?

WILLIE

Meet Liz and Pete Simms. Gerhard Plotz.

PLOTZ shakes hands with LIZ and PETE. He addresses LIZ.

PLOTZ
I've seen you before.

LIZ looks at him, smiling quizzically.

LIZ
Where?

PLOTZ
Main Stream Records.

LIZ
Small world.

PETE
Where are you from Gerhard.

PLOTZ
Planet Earth.

Laughter. Plotz pulls a half pint bottle of brandy from his pocket and hands it to WILLIE.

WILLIE
Thanks. Have something to eat.

He offers PLOTZ the plate of sandwiches. PLOTZ takes one. SHORTSTRAW eyes the sandwiches hungrily. WILLIE admonishes him in Zulu.

WILLIE
Hands off Shortstraw. Have a drink
but the food's for the guests.

There's a knock at the door. WILLIE shrugs, gets up and goes to the door. He opens it to two pretty young girls. They smile and talk to WILLIE in Zulu.

GIRLS

We saw the car. Thought you were having a party.

DISSOLVE TO
LATER TIME.

Charlie Parker is trilling up and down the be-bop scales at a pace. The room has filled with numerous African, young men and women, dropping by to see what's happening at WILLIE's. They sit around the room sipping wine, Brandy, beer, smoking, some of them chatting, some of them staring curiously at WILLIE's white guests. Everyone is a little drunk. The food is finished and a number of bottles empty. PLOTZ is in conversation with LIZ and PETE.

PLOTZ

Willie tells me you're organising the beauty competition in Drum.

PETE

He's doing the organizing.

PLOTZ

It's ironic.

PETE

What?

PLOTZ

An ugly white racist company like Ergol representing itself as a beautiful African woman.

PETE

I hadn't looked at it like that.

LIZ

You don't think it's the greatest idea then?

PLOTZ

If what I thought made any
difference there'd be a few changes
around here I can tell you. This
country has gone completely off its
rocker. To be rational is a
treasonable offence.

LIZ

What can we do about it?

PLOTZ

You can do what you like. I've got
troubles of my own.

A girl remonstrates with Willie in Zulu.

GIRL

Willie. Enough of this music. We
can't dance to it. Put on
something African we can dance to.

ANOTHER GIRL

Give us some Kwela Willie.

WILLIE

OK girls. You asked for it.

WILLIE selects a record and puts it on the record player. The
smoke filled room starts to bounce to an African rhythm.
People get up and find space to dance. WILLIE invites LIZ.
The Africans are delighted by the way LIZ dances. They clap
and dance around her. SHORTSTRAW leans over to PETE,
smiling.

SHORTSTRAW

Wheee! That Lizzi She's like an
African girl!

WILLIE leaves LIZ dancing while he goes to answer the door letting in another Africa. It's NIMROD, sad eyed, smiling, rolling a matchstick between his teeth. He nods to PLOTZ and PETE and admires LIZ's dancing. She sees him. Remembers him. Smiles.

LIZ

Didn't you want to dance?

NIMROD starts dancing, edging in on the crowded floor towards her. They dance in front of each other, checking each other out. There's a hammering on the door. WILLIE opens it. He retreats slowly into the room before an AFRICAN POLICE CONSTABLE with assegai in hand. Everyone looks. The chatter suddenly stops. The music stops. WILLIE slides a whisky bottle into his pocket. The CONSTABLE comes further into the room. He has a prisoner handcuffed to his other hand. He addresses WILLIE in Zulu.

CONSTABLE

What's going on Willie? This all looks a bit illegal if you ask me.

WILLIE

Just a few friends.

CONSTABLE

White friends eh?

WILLIE

Nothing illegal in that.

CONSTABLE

What is this everyone's drinking?

He picks up an empty glass and smells it.

WILLIE

Like a spot? It's very good.

As they talk, people are muttering farewells and sidling out the door.

CONSTABLE

Always said you were a gent Willie.
Don't mind if I do.

LIZ and PETE watch them apprehensively, not understanding the exchange between the cop and WILLIE. NIMROD, unperturbed, twirls the matchstick in his mouth. WILLIE sits the cop in the easy chair, his handcuffed prisoner still attached to him squatting at his side, and pours him a stiff drink. And then another. Everyone watches in silence.

CONSTABLE

This is fine hooch my boy. What happened to the music?

WILLIE puts the African jazz music on again.

Smokes?

WILLIE finds him a cigarette and a light. The CONSTABLE drains his glass and stands, his prisoner with him. He cocks his head, rocking to the music. Eyes closed, he smiles and starts dancing. He and his prisoner dance handcuffed together. LIZ and NIMROD join them. Then WILLIE, PETE and the girls and PLOTZ, still wearing his beret, everyone dancing and having a good time again.

INT. STUDIO AT SOAMES & STYMAN. DAY.

A middle-aged African in white jacket, NATHAN, collects empty coffee cups. Everyone is bent to the drawing board, working. PETE is at ROD's desk looking at photographs of a happy African family in a gleaming new Chevrolet, filling up with Ergol at a petrol station.

PETE

Keep the pic big and reverse out the headline. You won't need much space at the bottom. There won't be very much copy.

SANDY, at the desk in front of Rod's, turns around.

SANDY

Why bother with copy at all? The monkeys can't read. Nathan my boy can you read?

NATHAN picks up Sandy's cup, shakes his head without looking up.

NATHAN

Haikona baas.

SANDY

What petrol do you use in your car Nathan?

NATHAN smiles, shakes his lowered head.

NATHAN

Oooh. Ek het ni a car ni my baas.

SANDY

Baas Simms thinks you have. He thinks you've got a brand new fifty five Chevy.

Laughter. NATHAN shakes his head as he leaves.

It's irresponsible running ads like that. Gives these monkeys ideas above their station. What d'you say Andrew?

ANDREW replies without looking up from his work.

ANDREW

Rather old boy. Give 'em an arm
they'll take a leg. Look what's
happening in Kenya. We wouldn't
want that Mau Mau business here
would we.

SANDY

Not bloody likely.

PETE and ROD exchange looks of resignation.

EXT. A MAIN STREET, JOHANNESBURG. DAY.

A warm, sunny day. A colourful, busy, thriving scene. LIZ walking down the street, pauses to watch an African road gang, stripped to the waist, brown muscular torsos sweating, swinging their pickaxes in perfect rhythm to the song they chant.

ROAD GANG

Ubulungu goddam....
ubulungu goddam goddam!

Passers-by, Blacks and Whites, look at LIZ, wondering what has her so intrigued. She stops a passing African. He's surprised and curious.

LIZ

What are they singing?

The African looks up and down the street, as though fearful of being seen talking to her. He smiles.

AFRICAN

They sing "Whiteman goddam" missus.

He hurries off smiling, shaking his head.

INT. DRUM OFFICE. DAY.

LIZ walks through the fire doors.

POLLY
Morning LIZ.

LIZ
Morning Polly. Isaac at home?

POLLY
Go right through sweetheart.

LIZ goes through into the main office. NIMROD, at work at his desk, looks up surprised, smiling. He takes the matchstick from his mouth.

NIMROD
Hey Liz. What are you doing here?

LIZ smiles, pauses at his desk.

LIZ
That was quite an evening at Willie's.
It's a pity we didn't get a chance to talk. Isaac says you write poetry..

NIMROD
He was kidding you.

LIZ
He says it's good. Can I read some?

NIMROD
I don't think so. They're really not...

INT. ISAAC'S OFFICE. DAY.

Through the glass partition, ISAAC, moody, watches LIZ talking to NIMROD.

ISAAC'S POV.

LIZ writes on a scrap of paper and hands it to NIMROD. Touching him on the shoulder, she walks towards ISAAC's office. NIMROD, smiling, watches her go. He twiddles the matchstick between his teeth, folds the scrap of paper and puts it in his shirt pocket.

ISAAC'S OFFICE.

LIZ walks in smiling. Closes the door behind her.

ISAAC

Hi.

LIZ

You look glum. What's the matter?

ISAAC

I don't like you being nice to other men.

LIZ

Shush. Poor Isaac. Are you jealous?

ISAAC

Maybe.

LIZ

Are you serious?

ISAAC

Maybe.

LIZ sits down, smiles at ISAAC sympathetically.

LIZ

You know I'm a respectably married woman.

ISAAC looks at his watch.

ISAAC

What about lunch? I'm starving.

INT. HOTEL ROOM. DAY.

The blinds are drawn. LIZ and ISAAC are making love on the bed, LIZ gazing at the ceiling.

INT. LIZ AND PETE'S SITTING ROOM. NIGHT.

PETE is replenishing NIMROD's glass with brandy. LIZ comes out of the kitchen with a tray of ice. She puts ice into NIMROD's glass. He sips at it.

NIMROD

You're in a dangerous situation. You know very little about us. You hardly know we exist. We know everything about you down to the most intimate details of your family life. You give your children into our care. You're very trusting.

PETE

Should we all get out then? That's the logical conclusion isn't it?

NIMROD

It's up to you. None of us knows how it's going to work out... yes... I'd get out if I were you.

NIMROD drains his glass and gets to his feet.

I've got to get going...

He scratches his head, grimaces.

Write me a note Pete... in case the
cops stop me.

PETE's embarrassed. He gets a piece of paper and a pen.

PETE

What should it say?

NIMROD

This boy Nimrod is in my
employ. He has been working late
for me and is on his way home.
Then sign it employer.

PETE writes and signs and folds the piece of paper. NIMROD
pockets it without looking at it. They shake hands.

LIZ

How will you get home?

NIMROD

Walk.

LIZ

It's miles! Pete'll run you.

PETE

Sure.

NIMROD

It's OK. I like to walk at night.
It'll clear my head. Good night
Pete. Thanks for dinner.

PETE
Take care.

LIZ
I'll see you out.

LIZ and NIMROD exit. PETE picks up the empty brandy bottle.

EXT. LIZ AND PETE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

LIZ and NIMROD stand in the dark at the door of the house. She holds his hand, looks up into his sad eyes, his smile. She speaks softly to him.

LIZ
I wish you'd let Pete drive you home.

NIMROD
Thanks. I'll be OK.

Silence.

LIZ
So you think everyone should leave?

NIMROD
Everyone but you and me.

They embrace and kiss.

INT. KITCHEN, ISAAC'S HOUSE. DAY.

Hattie is pouring coffee. ISAAC, in worn out week-end clothes, slouches at the kitchen table reading a newspaper. The servant, MATILDA, washes clothes at the sink.

HATTIE
Want a cup Matilda?

MATILDA

No thanks.

ISAAC and HATTIE sip their coffee either side of the newspaper.
ISAAC hums quietly to himself, HATTIE lights a cigarette.

HATTIE

Haven't seen much of the Simms lately. What's happened to them? One minute they're best friends then suddenly they're not around anymore.

ISAAC grunts from behind the newspaper.

ISAAC

D'you have to smoke? Have you any idea what it's doing to your lungs?

Silence.

HATTIE

Pete's pissed off at you for paying so much attention to Liz. I bet that's it.

No reply from ISAAC.

That's it isn't it? I'm right aren't I?

ISAAC

Don't be so foolish woman.

ISAAC goes on reading. HATTIE smokes and sips coffee, her mind working furiously.

HATTIE (with growing suspicion)

Of course. You've been screwing her haven't you?

ISAAC lowers the paper.

ISAAC

Jesus Hats! This is Saturday morning! This is my time!

HATTIE

It was her at the party you bastard! Wasn't it?

ISAAC

What party?

HATTIE

And at the lake! You screwed her up at the lake you rotten sod.

ISAAC

Hats...

HATTIE

And he knows about it! That's why they don't come around!

ISAAC

Nonsense.

HATTIE

You can't fool me you bastard. The slut! Are you still screwing her? I'm going to call them...

HATTIE stands and goes to the telephone. ISAAC deflates, the clown departs. He looks out the window at the dog playing with the children. MATILDA is hanging up the washing.

ISAAC

There was something but it's over.

HATTIE puts down the telephone and bursts into tears.

HATTIE

You really are a fucking bastard.
You're always doing this to me.

ISAAC gets up, shrugs and goes out into the garden. HATTIE, through her tears and cigarette smoke, sees him playing with the dog and children. MATILDA is still hanging up the washing.

INT. HANNES STYMAN'S OFFICE. DAY.

STYMAN, FARQUARD, PETE and three other executives sit around a conference table. STYMAN reads from a letter.

STYMAN

Our research has found the campaign to be an unmitigated success. The advertisements scored above average for brand name recall. The beauty competition running in Drum Magazine, however, surpassed all known figures. Ninety percent of readers interviewed knew our name and liked it. The board have asked me to immediately extend the campaign nationally and they would like to see proposals and costs for a similar one for the Rhodesian market at your earliest convenience. Signed Graham Rodes. Advertising director.

STYMAN lays the letter gently on the desk.

That gentlemen is what I call success. Congratulations all round. I don't need to tell you how pleased I am. How's the final selection of contestants coming along Pete? How are the arrangements for the free-for-all at the... er...

PETE

The Odin cinema sir. It'll be a Sunday. I've agreed a fee of a hundred and fifty pounds for the day including rehearsal time. I'm talking to someone at Drum about getting bands and singing groups together. It should be a good party.

STYMAN

Well done Pete. You're becoming quite a mister show-business.

EXT. SUBURBAN HIGH-RISE. NIGHT.

Establish high-rise. PETE's car draws to the curb and parks. PETE and LIZ get out, lock doors. They walk into the lobby of the apartment block.

INT. 11TH FLOOR HALLWAY. NIGHT.

A number of people in the elevator as it opens. LIZ and PETE and another couple step out. LIZ and PETE walk down the corridor searching for an apartment number. The other couple stop at a door. While they unlock it, they watch LIZ and PETE suspiciously.

OTHER COUPLE'S POV

They watch LIZ and PETE find the door they're looking for and ring the bell. They see the door being opened by a beautiful light-skinned Basuto servant woman of about twenty-five.

GIRL (Eyes lowered.)
Ja my baas?

PETE
Mr. Plotz is expecting us.

GIRL
Wait a moment please.

The girl goes and PLOTZ comes to the door. Welcomes them inside.

PLOTZ
Hello. Go in.

PLOTZ looks up and down the hall.

PLOTZ'S POV.

The door down the hall closes.

INT. PLOTZ'S SITTING ROOM. NIGHT.

The room is plain and unpretentious. There's an absence of pictures or plants. A table with ash trays and two half empty glasses. The kitchen door is open, the African girl can be seen pottering around making coffee. PLOTZ waves PETE and LIZ to sit. PLOTZ sits down and offers them cigarettes which they take and light. LIZ leans over, smiling, her voice low.

LIZ

I wouldn't have thought you'd have a servant Gerhard. Not even a pretty one.

PLOTZ

You would be right. I don't.

Pause while LIZ tries to put two and two together.

LIZ

Who's the lady in the kitchen then?

PLOTZ

Miriam Lefoto.

PETE and LIZ look at each other and burst out laughing. MIRIAM comes in with a tray of coffee. She no longer wears her shoes or the statutory head-scarf. She puts the tray on the table, pours the coffee then hands the cups around.

MIRIAM

Help yourselves to cream and sugar.
What's so funny?

PLOTZ

They thought you were the servant.

MIRIAM

It's OK. You thought what you were meant to think. The performance was not for you it was for that couple down the hall.

PLOTZ

When Miriam is here she pretends to be what anyone would expect her to be.

LIZ, grinning with admiration, sticks out her hand.

LIZ

I'm Liz.

MIRIAM

This boy's so bad with
introductions. Nice to meet you
Liz.

LIZ

We bought your latest record. It's
tremendous.

PETE

I'm Pete. It's an honour.

MIRIAM

What nice friends you have Gerhard.

PLOTZ is at the hi-fi selecting a record.

Why don't you put on the new one?

Gerhard puts it on.

MIRIAM

I just finished recording this
afternoon.

The music comes on and MIRIAM immediately gets caught up in it, starts singing over it, swaying and dancing. LIZ claps in time to the music, kicks off her shoes, gets up and starts dancing. MIRIAM admires the way LIZ moves.

PLOTZ

Keep it down girls.

The girls dance together while PLOTZ and PETE watch.

PETE

I suppose you have to be pretty careful?

PLOTZ shrugs.

PLOTZ

You have to be pretty careful whatever you do in this country.

PETE

But right here in the middle of town?

PLOTZ

Where would you least expect a black and white to be living together?

The idea you can get jailed for making love to someone the wrong colour is pure Kafka.

PETE

Where are you from... on the planet?

PLOTZ

Zurich.

PETE

Why did you leave?

PLOTZ

The draft.

PETE

Why Africa?

PLOTZ

I'm crazy for African women.

EXT. LIZ AND PETE'S GARDEN. DAY.

A warm summer's afternoon. LIZ and PETE are entertaining PETE's mother and father, BEN and ROSE SIMMS, to tea. An umbrella-shaded table and chairs. Tea and cake on the table. LIZ is serving. PETE is taking snaps. ROSE is facing down the garden towards the servants' quarters. She looks up from her knitting.

ROSE'S POV.

DORIS comes out of the servant's quarters to hang up her washing.

ROSE
Doris not working today?

PETE
It's her day off.

ROSE
She's pregnant you know.

LIZ
She's not. Is she? How do you know?

BEN
Rose is never wrong about these things.

ROSE
Just look at her.

Everyone turns to look.

EVERYONE'S POV.

DORIS finishes hanging the washing and goes inside. A young African man comes out to empty a dustbin.

ROSE

And there's the father.

The young African goes back into the house.

LIZ

Zack? He's Doris's cousin.

ROSE

Cousin my eye. He's the father
take my word for it. What's he
doing here?

PETE

He needed a place to stay and a job
so we let him take care of the
garden.

ROSE

Get rid of him.

LIZ

If he's the father as you seem to
think - isn't this the best place
for him to be?

BEN

You youngsters must be careful.
Mum's right. They don't think the
way we do... about responsibility
and things like that.

ROSE

You think you're doing them a good turn and look what happens. If I were you I'd send them packing before you have a whole tribe camping at the bottom of the garden.

PETE

More tea mum?

LIZ

I'll get some hot water.

LIZ, seething, goes back to the house.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY.

LIZ puts the kettle down on the hob. She picks up a pack of cigarettes, nervously pulls one out and lights up.

INT. BEDROOM. DAY.

The curtains are drawn, the room in shadows. LIZ is lying on the bed, smoking. PETE enters.

LIZ

Are they still here?

PETE sits beside her.

PETE

Come on. They'll be gone in a little while.

LIZ

Sorry. I've had my daily dose of hypocrisy. You know what happens when I go over my limit.

PETE

Liz...

LIZ

The registrar of marriages didn't say anything about parents. They were not in the deal. They're your parents not mine so go and take care of them and leave me out of it. OK?

PETE leaves. LIZ lies on the bed smoking her cigarette, gazing at leafy patterns on the ceiling.

EXT. LIZ & PETE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

PETE parks the car in the drive and enters the house. He's tired. The house is in darkness.

INT. SITTING ROOM. NIGHT.

PETE slings his briefcase onto a chair. Turns on the lights. He takes off his jacket and pours himself a drink. He wanders into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

PETE puts on the light. Looks in the oven. Looks in the refrigerator.

INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT.

PETE switches on the light. He looks at his tired face in the mirror on the cabinet, feels his shadowed chin. He rinses his hands and face. Before leaving, he opens the cabinet, glances inside and closes it again. He switches off the light.

INT. SITTING ROOM. NIGHT.

PETE loosens his tie and flops into an armchair sipping his drink, pensive.

TIME DISSOLVE

PETE awakens in the armchair. The sounds of a car driving up, doors slamming and the car leaving again. The front door being unlocked. LIZ hurries into the room, apologetic. PETE rouses himself, looks at his watch.

LIZ

I'm sorry darling. Did you get yourself something to eat?

PETE

Where the hell've you been?

LIZ

You know where I've been. I told you I was having dinner with Miriam and Gerhard.

PETE

Until this hour?

LIZ

You know how it is at Gerhard's. A few people drop by and suddenly it's a party.

PETE

You might have called.

LIZ

I did. Several times. You weren't here. I imagined you'd got caught up at the office or something. Like a cuppa?

LIZ goes off to the kitchen. PETE lights a cigarette.

LIZ VO

I asked Miriam about doing the Ergol finale.

PETE

And?

LIZ VO

She'd love to! Miriam thinks your a charmer. She's going down to Durban this week end for a concert and she's invited us to drive down with her and Gerhard tomorrow evening. What do you think?

PETE

Damn. I can't.

LIZ returns with two mugs of tea. Puts one down by PETE.

LIZ

Why not?

PETE

The agency's sending me up to Bulawayo for a meeting. I don't think I can get back in time.

LIZ

So we'll go to Bulawayo instead. What time's the plane?

LIZ sips her tea.

PETE

It's best I go on my own.

LIZ

We could see a bit of Rhodesia. We could do the Zimbabwe Ruins. Wouldn't you like that?

PETE doesn't respond. LIZ puts her tea down.

Oh. You mean they wouldn't like it

PETE

It's only for one night for chrissake. It's hardly worth making a fuss about.

LIZ

Baas Styman thinks I might shoot off my mouth is that it? Is that what you think too?

PETE

Come off it LIZ...

LIZ walks out of the room into the bedroom slamming the door behind her.

INT. AN OFFICE RECEPTION ROOM. DAY.

A dozen or so men, two or three women, stand drinking cocktails and eating canapés. PETE is introduced all round. He responds charmingly to the chit-chat of the people he's meeting but it's clear his mind is elsewhere. PETE excuses himself, makes his way to the telephone and places a call. He waits.

PETE

Hi. It's me. I'm sorry. Yes. I'm desperately bored and missing you. I want to come with you to Durban. I think I can make it. There's a plane that gets me back

by six. I'll be home by seven at the latest. What time are they picking you up? They can wait a few minutes can't they? I'll be as quick as I can OK? I love you.
Bye.

PETE replaces the telephone, a little anxious.

INT. BOARDROOM. DAY.

A meeting in progress. PETE plays impatiently with a pencil. Looks at his watch.

MAN

Time has flown and our visitor from the Johannesburg office also has to fly... I think you've all met him.
Pete?

EXT. BULAWAYO AIRPORT. NIGHT.

PETE leaps from a taxi as it pulls up in front of the terminal. He dashes into the Terminal.

INT. BULAWAYO AIRPORT. NIGHT.

PETE skids to a stop at the check-in. The plane has left. The next is in an hour.

EXT. JAN SMUTS AIRPORT, JOHANNESBURG. NIGHT.

A passenger plane lands.

INT. JAN SMUTS AIRPORT. NIGHT.

PETE deplanes and runs into the terminal to a phone booth. He has to wait in line.

INT. LIZ & PETE'S SITTING ROOM. NIGHT.

LIZ sits at the desk writing a note. She looks at her watch. An overnight bag sits by the door. Outside, the sound of a car pulling up. It blows its horn. LIZ bites her lip. Hurries around. Places the note she's been writing by the table lamp. Looks at the telephone. Shrugs. Picks up her bag. The car outside blows its horn. She grabs her purse, switches out all the lights except the table lamp and leaves. The car can be heard driving away. Under the table lamp is the note.

NOTE

Dear Pete. What happened to you?
We waited as long as we could.
Everyone's terribly disappointed
but we had to go because of
Miriam's schedule. I'll call you.
Love.

The telephone starts ringing.

INT. JAN SMUTS AIRPORT PHONE BOOTH. NIGHT.

PETE on the phone, listens to the unanswered signal at the other end. He slams down the phone, walks impatiently out of the booth.

EXT. LIZ & PETE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Taxi pulls up at the house, PETE gets out. The house is in almost complete darkness. He enters.

INT. SITTING ROOM. NIGHT.

The only light is from the table lamp. Lying under the lamp, the note. PETE picks it up and reads it. He sinks into an armchair, rereads the note. He sits, thinking for a few moments, gets up and goes into the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT.

PETE switches on the light and opens the bathroom cabinet. He pulls everything out on to the floor. He can't find what he's looking for. He slams the cupboard closed, cracking the mirror. The telephone rings. The darkroom phone is nearest.

INT. DARKROOM. NIGHT.

PETE moves quickly to the phone.

PETE
Hello? Oh. It's you.

CUT BACK AND
FORTH TO

INT. ISAAC'S HOUSE. NIGHT

ISAAC on the telephone, speaking against the sound of loud music and chatter.

ISAAC
You sound down in the dumps boy.
There's a party here. Why don't
you two come over?
Hattie's complaining, we never see anything of you.

PETE
Liz isn't here. She's gone down to
Durban for the weekend with Miriam
Lefoto.

ISAAC
Right. One of our guys went down
with her.

PETE
Who? Did Willie go?

ISAAC

No. Willie was busy. I sent Nimrod down at the last moment to cover for him. Anyway. Why don't you come over?

CUT TO

PETE stares off into space.

ISAAC VO

Hello? You still there?

PETE

Look... I just got back from Bulawayo. I'll be over as soon as I've landed.

PETE replaces the phone. Miserable, he wanders into the sitting room.

INT. SITTING ROOM. NIGHT.

PETE pours a large brandy and downs it.

INT. ISAAC'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

A party is well into its drunken stage, people dancing to the hits of the day. ISAAC takes PETE's empty glass and pours him another drink.

ISAAC

What's the matter? You look like you just lost a client or something.

PETE

Liz's fucked off.

ISAAC

You're kidding? Left you?

PETE

Not exactly. I think she's screwing around.

ISAAC is uncomfortable.

ISAAC

Any idea who it is?

PETE

Could be anyone. Probably Nimrod. I thought it was Willie.

A few moments of silence. HATTIE sways up to them and puts her arms around PETE.

HATTIE

Don't waste your time talking to this boring old fart. You wouldn't like him so much if you really knew him...

ISAAC

You're drunk Hats. Why don't you go to bed?

HATTIE

Fuck off. I want to dance with this handsome stranger. You are a stranger you know? We hardly ever see you. You and that fascinating little wife of yours.

She looks churlishly at ISAAC and he moves away. PETE puts his arm around HATTIE and they dance. She steers him towards the door.

EXT. GARDEN. NIGHT.

HATTIE staggers and clings on to PETE.

PETE
You all right?

HATTIE
Never felt better. Come on... over here... I want to show you something.

She leads him unsteadily further into the garden away from the lights of the house.

PETE
What?

She moves his hands to her breasts and squeezes them there. She slides to the ground pulling PETE down with her, dragging her skirt up around her thighs. She thrusts his hand between her legs, stares insanely into his eyes.

HATTIE
Fuck me.

PETE
Hattie...

HATTIE
You can fuck can't you?

PETE
Come on Hattie. What about Isaac?

HATTIE
He won't mind. He's your friend isn't he? What's a little fuck between friends?

PETE

I'm sorry Hattie. I can't.

HATTIE is irate. She sits up glaring at PETE.

HATTIE

You bastard! What you mean you can't? I bet your good friend Isaac didn't have such fine feelings about you when he was fucking Liz!

PETE

What?

HATTIE

Come on Petey...

PETE is suddenly sobered by the revelation. He pulls away from her.

PETE

Liz and ISAAC...

HATTIE

Come on. Fuck me you beautiful bastard.

She reaches out to touch him. He stands and walks slowly away.

INT. THE HOUSE. NIGHT.

People are lying around on the couches, on the floor, some asleep, some necking. ISAAC is trying to keep the party going, leading two or three other men singing one of his old Afrikaans student songs "Dar kom die Alabama, die Alabama kom oor die see-ee-ee-ee". He stops at the sound of a car engine starting. He looks around. Walks outside.

EXT. GARDEN. NIGHT.

ISAAC stands unsteadily watching the receding lights of a car as it bumps away down the drive. He turns and looks around into the darkness.

ISAAC
Hats?

He can hear someone sobbing.

Hats? Is that you?

He wanders across the garden, peering into the darkness. Hattie is huddled on the grass sobbing her heart out. He sits down beside her. He gently strokes her hair.

INT. LIZ & PETE'S HOUSE. DAY.

Mid-morning. The key turns in the front door. LIZ comes in with overnight bag. She walks into the sitting room and stops short. She's amazed to find PETE at home, unshaven in his pajamas. He glowers at her.

LIZ
Hello darling. What are you doing home? What a nice surprise.

She opens her arms and crosses the room to him smiling. She hugs him, kisses his cheek.

PETE is unresponsive, unsmiling. LIZ is concerned.

LIZ
Why aren't you at work? You're all right aren't you pet?

PETE
Did you have a good weekend?

LIZ

It was great. I only wish you could have been there.

PETE

You said you'd call.

LIZ

It was just impossible. I couldn't find a phone. You know how it is in these places. How was Bulawayo? How did the meeting go? Are you feeling all right luv?

PETE

You couldn't wait could you?

LIZ hesitates.

LIZ

We waited as long as we could. Miriam had a schedule.

PETE

Was Nimrod there?

LIZ

Yes. He was on an assignment for Drum.

PETE

Did you sleep with him?

LIZ

What's this all about?

PETE

You slept with him didn't you?

LIZ

Don't be ridiculous. Of course not.

PETE

I don't believe you. And what about Isaac?

LIZ

Isaac?

LIZ looks at him as though she doesn't quite comprehend his question.

PETE

Yes, Isaac!! You know Isaac! You didn't sleep with him either did you?

About to answer, LIZ decides to give up. She sits slowly down on the arm of the chair. Her shoulders sag.

You haven't changed a bit. You just go on fucking everything in sight don't you?

LIZ

I'm sorry. I think I'd better go.

PETE

I don't give a shit what you do.

LIZ

I'm sorry.

PETE

I really thought being married would make a difference to us. I thought maybe if I made things good enough for you it would be different... you wouldn't want anyone else.

LIZ
I'm sorry.

PETE
And now it's a bloody African. Don't you know where we are? Do you only think with your cunt? Christ knows what'd have happened if you'd been caught. My job! Everything! You'd be in jail. Did you think of that? I thought when people got married they looked out for each other. You've turned our marriage into a fucking obstacle course. Not a day goes by I don't wonder when you'll hit me with the next fucking problem.

LIZ
I said I was sorry.

Silence. LIZ stands, picks up her overnight bag and goes to the door. PETE stands wretchedly with his back to her. They are both desperately sad. LIZ has her hand on the doorknob. She seems unable to turn to look at PETE.

I've made a mess of things again
haven't I?

PETE remains immobile, silent.
Can't we...

LIZ decides not to say what's on her mind. She's empty.
PETE doesn't move.

I guess not.

She leaves closing the door quietly behind her. PETE doesn't move. Tears course down his cheeks. He sighs deeply.

EXT. ODIN CINEMA, SOPHIATOWN. DAY.

The pink, white and green cement building pulsates with Township jazz music. It blares from loudspeakers to the hundreds of people crowding around the building out in the street. Everyone is dancing and having a good time. A banner strung across the front of the building reads MISS ERGOL 1956 BEAUTY CONTEST FINALS.

INT. ODIN CINEMA. DAY.

The auditorium is packed. MIRIAM is on stage with a ten piece band and twelve beauty contestants, belting it out to an outrageously enthusiastic audience. PETE stands in the wings with WILLIE and PLOTZ, his eyes roaming the audience. He sees LIZ in beret and dark glasses concealed amongst some Africans. Two white men in suits are taking notes. There's a disturbance in the wings behind PETE. He turns to see a group of suited Africans arriving back-stage, the political movers and shakers he'd met at ISAAC's.

PETE

What are these guys doing here?

He looks at WILLIE for answers but WILLIE, absorbed in MIRIAM's performance, hasn't heard him. PETE turns to PLOTZ.

What the hell's happening?

EXT. ODIN CINEMA. DAY.

The crowd applauds as Miriam comes to the end of her number. They listen to the voice from the PA loudspeakers.

VOICE

And now ladies and gentlemen it's time to announce the judges' decision and greet Miss Ergol 1956. But before we do that... there is someone here who wants to say hello to you. One minute... What's that?

Three police trucks drive up, pushing their way into the crowd. Platoons of armed policemen spill out onto the street, cordoning off the cinema.

INT. ODIN CINEMA. DAY.

The doors at the back of the auditorium burst open and a platoon of armed police, led by a MAJOR with a pistol in his hand, stride down the centre aisle. The audience is in confusion.

Up on stage, PETE sees the politicians spirited away. LIZ is struggling to get out but is prevented by police. The MAJOR is up on stage. He grabs the microphone.

MAJOR

I have reason to believe a banned person or persons is illegally in this building. Everyone will stay where they are.

A submissive murmur runs through the crowd.

EXT. A SHABBY OLD SUBURBAN APARTMENT BLOCK. NIGHT.

Taxi draws to the curb, LIZ gets out and goes into apartment block.

INT. APARTMENT BLOCK. NIGHT.

LIZ walks wearily up a flight of concrete steps into a hallway. She opens a door with a latch key and steps inside.

INT. LIZ'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

A one room apartment with a kitchen and bathroom. The curtains are drawn. LIZ sighs, switches on a light. NIMROD is lying half clothed on the bed asleep. He's awakened by the light. He raises himself half asleep on his elbow, shielding his eyes. He groans. LIZ kneels on the bed beside him and kisses him. She notices a bruise on his cheek.

LIZ

What happened to you?

NIMROD elbows himself into a sitting position, finds a dog-end in the ash tray and lights it.

NIMROD

I was getting out of bed and caught my face on the table here.

He grins wryly. LIZ goes into the bathroom and turns on the shower, comes back into the room, walks to the desk and glances at the few lines on a sheet of paper in the typewriter, the empty half-jack of Brandy.

LIZ

You didn't get far with the story.

NIMROD scratches his head.

NIMROD

The bottle got empty and the muse departed.

LIZ starts taking off her clothes.

LIZ

Did you know the ANC big wigs were going to be there this afternoon?

NIMROD

ANC? The beauty competition? Hell no. What happened?

LIZ

There was a raid. Someone must have tipped them off. The sods held us until they had everyone's name and address. They knew me. They even knew I wasn't living with Pete any more.

NIMROD

Was he there?

LIZ

I suppose so. I didn't see him. Poor old Pete. This'll do wonders for his career.

LIZ goes into the shower. NIMROD stubs out the dog-end and gets up off the bed. He wanders to the door of the bathroom.

NIMROD

Did you pick up any booze sweetie?

LIZ doesn't answer immediately.

LIZ VO.

In my bag.

NIMROD searches LIZ's bag and comes up with a half-jack of Brandy. He pours himself a liberal measure and drinks, savouring it. LIZ comes out of the shower dripping, toweling herself. NIMROD, spirits restored, looks at her admiringly, affectionately. She puts jazz music on the record player. They sit on the bed together.

LIZ

Do you really love me?

NIMROD kisses her.

NIMROD

How can I make it plainer?

LIZ

I mean it. Do you really?
Sometimes I think you love brandy
more.

NIMROD

Brandy's just a platonic friend.

LIZ

Some friend.

NIMROD drains his glass and puts it on the table. He unwraps the towel around LIZ and makes love to her. LIZ enjoys making love to NIMROD. She becomes loudly vocal in the throes of her passion.

There's a sharp knock at the door. They freeze. LIZ jumps out of bed, goes to the door, pulling on a bathrobe. She lays her head to the door, anxious.

LIZ

Who is it?

MAN'S VOICE. VO.

It's Mr. Katz next door. Could you

turn the music down Mrs. Simms? Mrs. Katz has a headache and can't sleep.

LIZ

Sure Mr. Katz. Sorry. Is there anything I can do for her?

MAN'S VOICE VO.

Just turn it down.

LIZ is relieved. She turns the volume of the music down low, gets back into bed with NIMROD. He lies with his back to her, she with her arms around him.

LIZ

Let's go to London. You'd love London. I can get a good job there. You could write. We'd be free. None of this paranoia. Wouldn't you like that my love?

She cuddles into his back. NIMROD stares sadly, vacantly across the room.

INT. TONY FARQUARD'S OFFICE. DAY.

Farquard, in dark glasses, sips coffee at his desk. PETE stands in front of him.

FARQUARD

Of course not dear boy. Nobody's saying it is. I don't believe for a moment you knew anything about it. Be that as it may the gods of Ergol have to be appeased.

PETE

Are you sacking me?

FARQUARD

Styman thinks it would be a good idea to take you off the account until this thing blows over. OK?

PETE turns to go.

One thing I would say to you as a friend Peter. Steer clear of getting too involved with the Africans. They won't thank you for it and you'll be the loser in the end.

PETE

I'm sure you're right Tony.

PETE leaves. Farquard takes a cognac bottle from a drawer, tops up his coffee and drinks.

INT. STUDIO. DAY.

It's lunch time. The art staff are eating sandwiches and listening to a radio broadcast of a cricket test-match. ROD and SANDY are playing cricket with a cardboard tube and a table-tennis ball. PETE sits at his own desk seeming to be reading a newspaper but consumed by his own down-beat thoughts. Rod can't find the table-tennis ball. Sandy ambles over to PETE. Sits down beside him.

SANDY

Sorry to hear about you and Liz.
Mustn't take it too hard lad.
Believe me... worse things happen
at sea.

PETE

So they say.

PETE goes on appearing to read. SANDY fondles the cardboard tube between his knees, leans forward confidentially.

SANDY

Sometimes things work out for the best lad. You could say Liz leaving home has cleared path a bit.

PETE

I suppose you could.

PETE folds the newspaper and stands. Looks at his watch.

I have to go. See you later.

PETE leaves. ANDREW shakes his head.

ANDREW

Poor old Pete's not taking it too well.

SANDY

I told him Liz was doing him a favour.

ANDREW

You're so right old man. That big mouth of hers would've landed him in it sooner or later.

SANDY

That's exactly what I said. What's the score?

ANDREW

All out for ninety-eight old boy.

SANDY claps his hands with delight.

INT. HOSPITAL WARD. DAY.

A private room. ROSE SIMMS lies in bed, PETE and BEN SIMMS either side of her. ROSE is pale and weak. BEN holds one of her hands, PETE the other. ROSE, smiling weakly, looks from PETE to BEN.

ROSE

Is Selma looking after you?

BEN

Don't worry about a thing. Just get yourself well again. I spoke to the surgeon. Everything went fine. He says we'll have you home in a week.

ROSE turns her head slowly to PETE.

ROSE

Is Liz looking after you?

PETE

Yes mum.

ROSE

She's a good girl really.

PETE

Yes.

PETE gazes out the window.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR. DAY.

PETE and BEN walk slowly towards the entrance, PETE has his

arm around his father's shoulders. Ben has tears in his eyes. They walk slowly down the corridor to the exit.

EXT. PETE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

PETE drives up, gets out of car, enters house.

INT. SITTING ROOM. NIGHT.

PETE drops his jacket and briefcase into a chair, loosens his tie, fixes himself a drink and walks through to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

The back door opens as PETE enters the kitchen and DORIS, very pregnant, comes in. She stretches her back against the weight of her belly.

PETE
Hello Doris.

DORIS
Good evening Pete. I heard the car.

DORIS goes to the fridge. Starts taking out dishes of food.

PETE
I'm not hungry. I had a sandwich at the office.

PETE sits at the kitchen table with his drink. Watches DORIS wearily return food to the fridge.

PETE (cont.)
Where's Zack? I want to talk to him. The garden's a mess.

DORIS
I don't know where he is.

PETE
You mean he's not home?

DORIS smiles shyly.

DORIS
He has left home.

PETE
Left? The bastard. Left you like
this? What a complete bastard.
You don't know where he went?

DORIS
No.

PETE
Well we'd better find him.

DORIS
It doesn't matter.

PETE
Of course it matters. What are you
going to do? What about the baby?

DORIS shrugs and goes to the door.

DORIS
We'll go back to Natal to my
family.

PETE
When's the baby due?

DORIS

I don't know exactly. Not yet
awhile.

DORIS closes the kitchen door quietly behind her.

EXT. TOWNSHIP. NIGHT.

SUPER DECEMBER 1956

The sky is beginning to lighten in the East as trucks and vans full of police bump along the deserted, still dark streets. Police knock rudely on doors opened by frightened confused people. Houses are searched, property confiscated, people singled out. Arrests are made and the prisoners shoved roughly into vans.

NEWSREADER VO.

Top ANC leaders and white lawyers and business men will be amongst those to stand trial for their lives. Today one hundred and fifty-six people of all races were arrested on charges of high treason.

Early this morning police raided homes across the republic arresting one hundred and fifty-six people. The Public Prosecutor in an unprecedented move issued warrants for the arrests after a meeting with the chiefs of internal security yesterday afternoon. Prisoners are being flown from Durban Capetown and Port Elizabeth to Johannesburg where they will be charged...

INT. DRUM OFFICE. DAY.

A hive of activity. Much telephoning and typing and coming and going.

INT. ISAAC'S OFFICE. DAY.

ISAAC is on the telephone.

ISAAC

Where the hell is he then? I haven't seen him all week. If you find him tell him to get his arse here pretty damn quick.

He puts down the phone and turns to the news editor JASON NDUBE.

Have you seen NIMROD? He's supposed to be doing the piece on Mandela.

JASON shakes his head.

JASON

Did you check the shebeens?

ISAAC shrugs, dismissively. He picks up a photograph.

ISAAC

OK. Page one then. This nice smiley pic of Mandela, Sisulu and Tambo. A really big banner headline "Guilty of High Treason?" and then...

ISAAC turns a page.

an entire spread of pics... all the people that were arrested. OK? Everyone of them... their names and where they're from. Then your piece. Some about the arrests... eye witnesses and so on.

The phone rings, ISAAC picks up, listens, picks at a thread in his sweater.

Sure. Silver Beck at one.
Totsiens.

ISAAC, thoughtful, replaces the phone. Back to JASON.

ISAAC
Tell Fritz to get some pix of the
Drill Hall where they're going to
hold the trial. See if he can get
one or two of the police.

ISAAC ties his shoelace, straightens his tie and gets to his
feet.

INT. SILVER BECK BAR. DAY.

ISAAC and PETE sit in silence at a table drinking beer.
Slouched in their chairs, they avoid each others eyes.

ISAAC
Your show really got screwed up
didn't it? Don't suppose the
agency was too pleased.

PETE
No.

ISAAC
At least they didn't give you the
sack.

PETE
I don't suppose you knew the ANC
were going to be there did you?

ISAAC

No. But I wasn't surprised. You'd have taken the opportunity if you'd been them wouldn't you? It's not some game they're playing.

Silence.

PETE

There's something I think we need to talk about...

ISAAC

Right...

PETE

Yeah. It's about Liz and...

PETE is interrupted by a middle-aged man on his way to the bar. He greets ISAAC as he passes their table.

MAN

Hello Schein. Keeping those coons of yours in order? Surprised they didn't arrest the lot of you this morning.

The man smiles. ISAAC smiles. Waits until the man is out of earshot.

ISAAC

He's the news editor on the Mail. I used to work for him stupid bastard.

PETE heaves a sigh. Silence. ISAAC fiddles with his glass.

ISAAC

Sorry. You were saying? Yes. Liz...

Have you seen anything of her?

PETE

No. Have you?

ISAAC

No.

Silence. ISAAC fiddles with the loose thread in his sweater.

What'll you do? Going to stay?

PETE shrugs.

PETE

There's dad... Mum's not at all well...

ISAAC

I've been talking to Hattie about moving out. I don't even know if I could get a passport. I don't really want to leave with the trials coming up... everyone's arriving. All the London papers... the New York Times. And you know what? We my boy are the only ones who really know what's going on here. You've got to stay. History's happening right before our eyes. Why don't you take pictures for us? Carry your camera around with you. I'll pay you for anything we use.

PETE considers it. ISAAC stands, picks up their empty glasses.

Same again?

INT. LIZ'S APARTMENT. DAY.

The blinds are closed, the apartment lights on. LIZ stands by the wall at the edge of the curtains, careful not to be seen, looking out on the street.

LIZ'S POV.

In the bright sunlight, three bare-footed Africans dressed in servants' shorts and shirts are standing around the entrance of the apartments opposite, playing music on a guitar, fiddle and mbira thumb-harp. Servant girls in berets, sweaters and tight skirts sit and stand around appreciating the music, moving to it.

LIZ smiles sadly. She moves away from the window. NIMROD is lying on the bed.

LIZ

ISAAC called this morning while you were asleep.

NIMROD stares at the ceiling.

NIMROD

What did he want?

LIZ

You.

NIMROD

How did he get this number?

LIZ

Gerhard.

NIMROD
What did you tell him?

LIZ
I said you were drunk.

NIMROD
Thanks a lot.

LIZ
I said I hadn't seen you...

NIMROD swings his legs carefully off the bed. Steadies himself.
Tries to stand. LIZ goes to help him.

You shouldn't get out of bed.

NIMROD
I have to piss.

He stands and walks unsteadily to the bathroom.

LIZ
I'll make some coffee.

She goes to the kitchen. There's an almighty crash from the
bathroom.

Jesus Christ!

LIZ rushes to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM. DAY.

NIMROD is on his knees by the toilet, a bleeding gash on his
forehead, a half-jack of brandy broken and spilled on the
floor. He doesn't seem to know where he is. LIZ, terrified,

drops to her knees beside him.

INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY.

NIMROD is in bed, a Band-Aid on his forehead. He still manages to smile and twirl a matchstick between his teeth. LIZ comes from the kitchen with a mug of coffee.

NIMROD

What would I do without you?

LIZ

Drink this.

NIMROD

No booze left?

LIZ puts the mug of coffee on the bedside table and sits down on the bed. She's unamused.

LIZ

Sure. Lap it off the bathroom floor.

NIMROD takes her hand.

NIMROD

Don't be so serious girl. Why do you try to hide my booze?

LIZ

Why not? I'm only trying to save you from yourself.

NIMROD

I said don't be so serious. Be a sweetheart. Run out and get me a little half.

LIZ

And when did 'being serious' become such a bad thing? Is everything so trivial to you? What about your poetry? What about Africa? What about me? Doesn't anything matter to you any more except the fucking booze?

She gets up from the bed. Goes to the curtain, looking out as before.

NIMROD

You want me to take this life stone cold sober? You want me to weep and be sad don't you? Whites are all the same. You have to have us on a fucking cross bleeding crying suffering before you can shed a single tear of remorse. Find yourself another fucking martyr. Get me a fucking drink or leave me alone.

LIZ is hurt. They both sulk in silence.

LIZ

Do you hate me so much?

NIMROD takes the matchstick out of his mouth. He sighs.

NIMROD

Come here.

LIZ looks at him dubiously. She sits on the bed, holds his hands, sighs. NIMROD smiles gently.

Hate you girl? You're the only light in my life.

LIZ looks at him sadly. She takes him in her arms and holds him tenderly.

EXT. DRILL HALL. DAY.

A large crowd of Africans of all ages, shapes and sizes, surrounds the entrance to the Drill Hall. PETE, with camera, struggles to get through the crowd. There is a strong police presence. A paddy-wagon drives up to the gates, clenched fists of the prisoners inside thrust through the barred windows. The crowd, as one voice, thunders "Maibuya Afrika" as the prisoners disembark and are led into the Drill Hall. Successive paddy-wagons arrive. The crowd responds in the same way each time. A voice bellows out on a PA system.

PA. VOICE

This is a police warning! This crowd must disperse. This is an unlawful gathering. You must all go home.

The crowd grows angry. People yell back at the disembodied voice. The line of police surrounding the Drill Hall are restless. They draw their batons. PETE is close to them and starts taking photographs of them.

PA. VOICE

This is a last warning! If you do not disperse immediately you will be in contravention of the Unlawful Gatherings Act section twenty-two and liable to arrest!

The crowd is furious and surges towards the police line. Whistles are blown and the police move forward, lashing out at everyone in their path. PETE snaps away until the camera is struck out of his hand and trampled on the ground. He is arrested and thrown into a paddy-wagon with scores of other people.

FREEZE FRAME

PETE grinning, surrounded by jubilant, smiling black faces just before the doors of the paddy-wagon are closed on them.

PULL BACK

INT. HANNES STYMAN'S OFFICE. DAY.

STYMAN is at his desk looking at the photograph dominating the front page of the Rand Daily Mail. STYMAN picks up his phone, presses a button.

STYMAN

Farquard. See that Simms and all his belongings are out of here by five o'clock.

He puts down the phone. He picks up the newspaper, folds it and drops it in his waste basket.

INT. PETE'S BEDROOM. DAY.

PETE wakes up to the singing of birds. Bright daylight streams through chinks in the curtains. Slowly, he sits up and looks at his watch, then sinks back into the pillows again, eyes gazing carelessly at the ceiling.

INT. BATHROOM. DAY

PETE comes out of shower, towels himself. He combs his hair. The bathroom cabinet still displays a broken mirror.

INT. DARKROOM. DAY.

PETE unclips prints of the Drill Hall riots from the drying line, puts them in a large envelope, turns out the light and leaves.

EXT. FRONT OF PETE'S HOUSE. DAY.

In the driveway, a Vespa motor scooter. PETE comes out locking the door behind.

He's dressed in open-necked shirt and slacks; he carries his new camera military style across his back. He puts on sunglasses, mounts the scooter, kicks it into life and rides off.

INT. DRUM OFFICE. DAY.

PETE walks in, camera slung over his shoulder, packet of photographs in hand. Everyone greets him. He goes over to WILLIE.

PETE
ISAAC busy?

WILLIE makes a face.

WILLIE
He's in with Jim.

PETE
The publisher?

WILLIE
Our lord and master.

PETE
Something up?

WILLIE tosses the latest copy of Drum across his desk to PETE. PETE looks at the colour cover. A black female American tennis star hugs her vanquished white adversary. In bold type across the cover "BLACK WINS AT WIMBLEDON!"

PETE
What's the matter with it? Its

great.

WILLIE

Jim doesn't think it's great. Jim thinks it stinks. Jim thinks it'll get him into trouble. Jim wants to withdraw it.

PETE

And Isaac?

WILLIE shrugs his shoulders. The door of ISAAC's office opens and JIM strides out. He smiles coldly at the staff as he passes through. ISAAC saunters out of his office. Waves to PETE.

WILLIE

Don't keep us in suspenders. What happened?

ISAAC

Nothing much. Jim withdrew the entire issue and I resigned.

EXT. JEWISH CEMETERY. DAY.

BEN SIMMS weeps copiously at a graveside as the Rabbi performs burial rites. PETE stands soberly, thoughtfully at BEN's side. He takes his arm.

INT. BEN & ROSE'S APARTMENT. DAY.

PETE and BEN sit in silence in the late afternoon. SELMA dressed in black moves around like a shadow, serving them tea.

PETE

What are you going to do dad?

BEN sighs. He stares out of the window.

BEN

I shall go back to England son.
There's nothing here for me now.
It doesn't feel like home any more.
And you?

PETE

I don't know. I feel very
uncertain about the future.

BEN

Why don't you come home with me?

PETE

I can't dad. Not yet. I have to
be here.

BEN

Liz?

PETE

Yes.

BEN

Things never seem to work out the
way you think they will do they?

BEN starts weeping.

I'm sorry. Everything seems so
meaningless now without Mum.

He gets up and walks slowly out onto the balcony. He gazes
abstractedly at the not too distant city, his eyes wet with
tears. Two Africans can be heard in loud altercation on the
street below.

INT. JAN SMUTS AIRPORT LOUNGE. NIGHT.

HATTIE, dressed for travel, nervously smoking a cigarette, stands with PETE. PETE carries his camera.

HATTIE

I could do with a drink.

PETE looks around.

PETE

There must be a bar.

HATTIE

There's no time. I'll get one on the plane.

She drops her cigarette to the floor, expunges it with her low-heeled shoe.

I don't suppose we'll be seeing you for a while.

PETE

Suppose not. I have to stay.

HATTIE

You amaze me.

PETE

Why?

HATTIE

You're such a fool. Don't you see how she uses you? When she'll come back to you is when she's down and out. You're such a nice chap. Always there when you're needed. Ready to pick up the pieces.

PETE shakes his head.

PETE

It's not like that.

HATTIE

No? Mark my words. Where the hell's that Isaac?

You should get out while you have the chance. While she's someone else's problem. But you won't because you're a fool.

ISAAC and the CHILDREN saunter up to them, loaded down with sweets and comics.

Where have you been? It'll be just like you to make us all miss the damned plane.

ISAAC

Come on Hats. They haven't even called the flight yet...

PUBLIC ADDRESS VO.

Will all passengers leaving on flight two one six go to gate A for boarding. Please have your boarding passes ready.

The message repeats in Afrikaans.

HATTIE

Come on children.

MAEVA

Pete. You will take good care of Charlie won't you?

PETE

Course I will. As long as Charlie takes good care of me. Why don't you write him a postcard from London. He'd like that.

MAEVA

I will.

PETE

You too Isaac. Write Charlie a postcard.

PETE and ISAAC grip hands. They smile at each other. PETE kisses the children and Hattie and takes a quick snap of them all as they wave goodbye and walk away down the hall.

INT. PETE'S HOUSE. DAY.

The door bell is ringing. Charlie the black Labrador bounds to the door. DORIS comes slowly from the kitchen. She is in a very late stage of pregnancy. PETE looks up from the desk where he's writing. He hears DORIS open the door and men's voices speaking in Afrikaans. He listens.

1ST MAN VO.

Well well my pretty maiden.
Someone's left a very large bun in
your oven. Is your master at home?

PETE VO (calling out)

Who is it Doris?

DORIS, holding Charlie by the collar, backs into the room followed by the two men. One of them carries a briefcase.

2ND MAN
Mr. Simms?

PETE nods.

PETE
It's OK Doris.

DORIS takes Charlie into the kitchen. The back door can be heard opening and closing.

1ST MAN
I was just saying what a pretty
girl you got. You English like our
African maids. Eh?

2ND MAN
Is she a live-in maid Mr. Simms?

PETE
Who are you? What do you want?

The first man takes out his wallet and opens it. Shows it to PETE.

1ST MAN
We're special branch Mr. Simms.
We'd just like to have a little
talk with you. May we sit down?

INT. LIZ'S APARTMENT. DAY.

The curtains are drawn closed. LIZ is reading at the desk. NIMROD is asleep in bed. The telephone rings. LIZ answers it.

LIZ
Oh. Hello. How are you?

She listens, looks across the room at NIMROD.

What about?

Listens. Looks at her watch.

OK. I'll see you there. Goodbye.

EXT. CAFE. DAY.

PETE sits at an outside table sipping coffee reading a newspaper. Charlie lays in the shade at his feet. He looks up from the paper as LIZ approaches. He stands and draws a chair out for her. They sit. He waves at a waiter. LIZ pats the dog.

LIZ
Hello Charlie.

PETE
What'll you have?

LIZ
Nothing for me thanks.

PETE
How have you been?

LIZ
Not so dusty. And yourself?

PETE
I've missed you.

LIZ
I'd have thought you'd have been glad to see the back of me. I've never been able to figure you out Pete. I lead you a merry dance... make you miserable as sin and you say you miss me. Like a hole in

the head?

PETE

I love you.

LIZ shakes her head again with incomprehension, smiling sadly at him.

LIZ

I'm sorry about the way I've treated you.

LIZ puts her hand on his.

I heard about your mum.
I'm so sorry. It must have been a shock for you. How's your dad taking it?

PETE

He couldn't deal with the loneliness. He went back to England. I want you back Liz.

LIZ

Even after all this?

PETE

I am going home to England and I want you to come with me. A new start. It'll be different there. Everyone's getting out. ISAAC and Hattie and the kids have gone.

LIZ

I know. Gerhard's going back to Switzerland. He and Miriam have broken up.

PETE

Why don't we go too? I don't think

you realise the danger you're in.
I'm worried about you.

LIZ
Still?

PETE
I had a visit from the special
branch this morning. They have a
dossier on us this thick. They
know every move we've made...
every person black and white we've
spoken to since we got off the boat
in Cape Town.
They know everything... when you
left me... where you live. I'm
telling you it's time to go.

LIZ
I can't.

PETE
Why not?

LIZ
I can't. That's all.

PETE
Is it Nimrod? Are you still seeing
him?

LIZ
Yes.

PETE
Are you in love with him?

LIZ
Love? I don't know.

PETE

The police must know about you.
You know that don't you?

LIZ

When are you going?

PETE

Soon. I haven't fixed a date.

They are silent for a few moments.

Come home with me.

LIZ

I can't. I'm home already.

LIZ stands. PETE stands. She kisses his cheek.

I must be getting back. It's nice
of you to think of me. I'll always
love you for that. Good luck Pete.

PETE is sad and empty. He watches LIZ walk away.

INT. PETE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

PETE is awakened by a noise. He gets up, walks curiously into the kitchen and listens. He opens the back door and listens. He hears a muffled cry of pain. He picks up a flashlight and goes cautiously out into the garden. Charlie trots after him.

EXT. GARDEN. NIGHT.

PETE goes down the path towards the servant's quarters. A light is on in DORIS's room. PETE knocks at the door. Another cry of pain. PETE opens the door and goes in.

INT. DORIS'S ROOM. NIGHT.

DORIS is on the bed having birthing contractions. She smiles weakly at PETE as he comes in.

PETE
My god Doris. What's happening?

DORIS
The baby.

PETE is flustered.

PETE
The baby. My god. I'll get a
doctor.

DORIS arches her back in pain.

DORIS
Too late. He's coming now.

PETE
What shall I do? I don't know what
the hell to do...

DORIS eases herself off the bed and takes up a squatting position on the floor. She gasps with pain as she gives in to the final contractions.

DORIS
It's all right. It's all right.
Just do as I tell you.

EXT. GARDEN. NIGHT.

Charlie sits outside DORIS's house, sniffing the night air.

INT. TAXI. DAY.

DORIS cuddling her baby, sits in the back with Charlie. PETE sits in front with the driver.

EXT. PARK STATION, JOHANNESBURG. DAY.

The taxi comes to the curb. PETE gets out, helps DORIS and the baby out of the back. Takes a suitcase from the boot of the car. They walk into the railway station, Charlie on a leash. PETE gives DORIS an envelope.

PETE

Your ticket and your wages.

She takes it and smiles at him. PETE is awkward. He looks around. People are watching them.

Well then. I'd better say goodbye.

PETE chucks the baby under the chin.

'Bye little fellow.

PETE hands DORIS Charlie's leash. He pats the dogs head.

'Bye Charlie. Take good care of
'em.

DORIS

Thank you.

PETE

'Bye Doris.

PETE touches DORIS's hand. She turns and walks towards the train, Charlie sloping along at her heels. PETE watches them out of sight then leaves.

INT. WILLIE'S ROOM, SOPHIATOWN. NIGHT.

WILLIE and PETE sip drinks. No music. A sober mood. A sense of things winding down.

WILLIE

I'd go if I were you. With or without her. South Africa's not your business. You'll only get hurt.

PETE

I feel like a rat leaving a sinking ship.

WILLIE

You're a white rat. It's black rats only on this old tin can.

They chuckle. WILLIE pours them another drink.

PETE

Why don't you get out Willie?
You've had offers.

WILLIE

Don't you think I'd leave if I could? Sure I could go to America. Sure I've had offers... scholarships. The big apple. Land of my dreams. You think I wouldn't like to go?

PETE

Why don't you? It's your life.

A knock on the door. WILLIE stands. PETE hides the brandy bottle.

WILLIE

Don't panic. I have a surprise for you.

WILLIE goes to the door, listens, opens it. POLLY NESSIM walks in.

POLLY

Hi Willie. Hi Pete. I came to say goodbye.

She kicks off her shoes and starts undressing. WILLIE walks to the door, smiles at PETE and waves. He leaves closing the door behind him. POLLY stands in her slip in front of PETE. PETE smiles sheepishly as she starts undressing him. They make love on WILLIE's bed.

INT. LIZ'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

LIZ and NIMROD in bed asleep. LIZ is rudely wakened by a thundering splintering crash as her front door is smashed open and uniformed police rush into the apartment. One has a camera and is taking flash photographs of LIZ in bed with NIMROD. NIMROD awakes to semi consciousness. Smiles as though he's in the middle of a dream. The police scream at him in Afrikaans.

POLICE

You fucking Kaffir! Get your fucking black arse out here.

One of them slaps LIZ in the face.

You fucking whore bitch!

Another pulls NIMROD by the arm dragging him onto the floor.

NIMROD doesn't resist. They kick him as he lies inert on the floor. The flash fires continuously. LIZ screams and cries. NIMROD is kicked again and again.

POLICE

Get up you blicksem!

LIZ

Leave him alone you bastards! Can't you see he's sick?

She struggles loose from a policeman's grasp and flings herself on top of NIMROD to protect him. A police boot kicks NIMROD in the head. NIMROD has an unseeing look in his eyes, a St Sebastian kind of smile on his lips.

POLICE

Get her off him! The filth! I'll give him what for! Defiling the white human race!

They pull LIZ off him. She lashes out with her fists, screams at them.

LIZ

He's dead. He's dead you fuckers! Can't you see he's dead?

She breaks into hysterical weeping.

You killed him you fuckers! He's dead. He's dead...

The flash freezes this horrific scene.

EXT. PETE'S GARDEN. DAY.

Bright, blue-sky winter's morning. PETE in an overcoat, collar turned up against the wind wanders around the garden. It's become unattended, looks much the same as when he first

brought LIZ there. A door on the servants quarters creaks as it swings open and closed. PETE picks up a chair blown over by the wind. He sits.

INT. JAN SMUTS AIRPORT, JOHANNESBURG. DAY.

PETE strolls around the terminal waiting for his flight to be called. He browses through magazines and books. He picks up an Afrikaans newspaper 'Dagbreek'. He's looking at a flash photograph of LIZ, streaming tears, screaming at the camera, surrounded by uniformed police holding her. NIMROD's body lays on the floor beside her. PETE is stunned. He turns to go.

SHOPKEEPER

Are you going to pay for that?

PETE gives him a coin and wanders back into the terminal in a daze. He sits down on a bench staring at the photograph.

PA. VOICE.

South African Airways flight five seven seven to London is ready for boarding. Passengers should proceed immediately to gate number three.

The message is repeated. All the passengers move off towards Gate number three. PETE hesitates. He looks at the newspaper photograph again. He rolls the newspaper tightly, picks up his bag and walks briskly the other way, towards the airport exit.

END

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